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A SURVEY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE
1730–1780

A SURVEY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

1730-1780

BY

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46603

Bringing things to light, alone and of itself, is of no manner of use, any otherwise than as entertainment or diversion.—BISHOP BUTLER, *On the Ignorance of Man.*

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TO THE MEMORY OF

G. Y. E.

PREFACE

The present *Survey*, the last that I shall make, is on the same lines as before ; but it takes the story backwards from 1780, and not forwards from 1880. Hence Burke and a few lesser writers, who belong to more than one *Survey*, have been reviewed again, I hope without undue repetition. Of late years the literature of our eighteenth century has come back into its own : and I think the real reason to be that it expresses, better perhaps than that of any other time, the permanent average temper of our race, as it is found in Johnson, in Fielding, and in Captain Cook. It also expresses the Scottish and the Irish genius : there are Hume, and Smollett, and Thomson ; Goldsmith, and Burke, and Sheridan. Such a variety mocks at the formulae which in more than one chapter I have attempted to disparage. There may be a further cause, and a more ephemeral one, for the present vogue of the eighteenth century. Some of the younger critics seem even now to be up in arms against the nineteenth, against the ' Victorian age ' ; but why ? Are they really still afraid of it, or do they know in their hearts that they are unjust to it ? However that may be, it will soon cease to be disliked or neglected ; it will be viewed at a distance, impartially ; it will seem as harmless as the age of Anne. Meantime Gray and Boswell and Walpole cause no apprehension, and find their expert and devoted students ; and the lesser poets, the forgotten minims, are being rediscovered and quoted. The unprofessional reader will be startled by the labour that is being spent on this period not only at home but overseas, especially in France and America. Surely a time will soon come when all is known that is in the least worth reading for its own sake, and when much that is unearthed will again disappear. Meantime the work of the digger and commentator is not lost ; for many a document, even if not literature, throws light on literature and on the elusive temper of the time. As

the notes will show, an effort has been made to profit by the fruits of this scholarship. I cannot hope to have done so to the full, or to have mentioned the first discoverer in every field. The American work is scattered in many academic volumes, and is indispensable. But I must take the opportunity to offer thanks for the hospitality of the great library in Harvard University, freely given two years ago ; and also for courtesies shown, during many months, in the Bodleian.

Some other debts, not mentioned in the notes, must also be acknowledged. My friend the late Mr. Thomas Seccombe encouraged me to write the book ; I only wish he had lived to write it instead. His deep knowledge of the time, and his affinity with its spirit, are seen in his *Age of Johnson*, which in spite of its enforced compression cannot be superseded. I also owe much to the sympathy and interest of Sir Edmund Gosse, whose critical vision was so clear and keen to the last. To his various writings on the eighteenth century, and to those of Professor Saintsbury, the obligations are too many to specify. Professor Saintsbury has added to them by reading the proofs, and by his ever valuable advice. I must also thank Mr. David Nichol Smith for kindly throwing light on points that have been submitted to him.

Needless to say, there can be no question of competing, on their own lines, with writers like Austin Dobson and Sir Leslie Stephen. We all draw on their stores, on Courthope's *History of English Poetry*, and on the great co-operative work of the *Cambridge History of English Literature*. The fresh and original handling of the period by Professor Louis Cazamian, in the admirable *Histoire de la Littérature anglaise*, by Professor Emile Legouis and himself, is now well known in England.

O. E.

Oxford, *June* 1928.

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CHAPTER I

PROSPECTIVE

I

During the first fifteen years (1727-1742) of the reign of George the Second, the 'Augustan age,' as it was understood by Goldsmith, begins to be transformed and pass away. The change is disguised by the presence of Pope, who now, after producing the less satisfactory *Dunciad* and *Essay on Man*, wrote better than he had ever written since the *Rape of the Lock*. It is the period of the *Moral Essays* and the *Imitations of Horace*. But Pope, all the while, was outliving his compeers; new forms and styles were arising by his side. He lived till 1744, and left an unfinished satire entitled *1740*. Swift, who survived, in the body, a year longer, had finished his real work earlier than Pope; perhaps the last great flare-up of his genius was the poem *On the Death of Dr. Swift* (1731). Steele, who had been silent for some time, died in 1729, ten years after Addison. Defoe lived till 1731, and went on writing to the end. To these chieftains of the 'Augustan age' the present volumes will only refer in passing and in order to throw light on their successors. Berkeley and Bolingbroke, who survived longer, will be more fully noticed. In the history of an art there are all kinds of survivals, and reversions, and anticipations. Literary periods are not clear-cut to suit the convenience of the historian. From one point of view the story begins in 1660; from another, with the death of Dryden in 1700. The years 1727-1742 are also critical. New intellectual needs, modes of feeling, literary forms and styles, now come to light. They come at different dates, and in separate corners of the field, like the flowers; but the broad seasons are marked nevertheless. The nature of the changes will be suggested in chapter after chapter; but a rapid prospect, by way of preface, may be of use.

II

The motto from Bishop Butler on the title-page I have tried to take to heart; and here is another, from *Candide*:

Les sots admirent tout dans un auteur estimé; je ne lis que pour moi; je n'aime que ce qui est à mon usage.

The 'usage' in the opening chapters (II., III.) is not altogether the received one. Among the makers of memoirs, letters, and journals are Chesterfield, Horace Walpole, and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu; but others will be found who are only writers by courtesy if at all. They are included simply because they seem to be amusing or enlivening. Instead of always mentally starting with the classics and looking down on the rest from that eminence, why not for once work upwards, and begin with life, with some of the artless authors, the half-literate great ladies, or the bourgeois travellers, and see what they will yield? This brings us nearer to the ore of literature, the actual speech of our forefathers; the elaborate and mannered styles are smelted out of it, with some of the precious metal gone; and the plain, pure, central styles, of Goldsmith or Smollett, are just that natural speech itself, educated and selected. The unprofessional authors often hit on the right and only word, which *is* literature. If we are on the look-out for quiet absurdity, it is oftenest to be found in the prim women of the pen, the Lady Pomfrets and Mrs. Chapones, who come between these extremes. In any case, the reader may hear some echo of the Babel of accents in that real far-off world, before he passes to the arranged, or invented, world of the essay and the novel.

The essay (Ch. IV.) is coupled, as toastmasters say, with the name of Goldsmith, who might equally well have ranked among the playwrights or the novelists; but his language, like that of all the best essayists who follow Addison, reproduces the living voice in its gentler tones. It is to Goldsmith, who cannot be parodied or imitated, that we come back from more rhetorical or flamboyant writers; to the central, true, enduring pattern of English prose. Johnson, who with Boswell comes next (Ch. V.), is in his more formal work at the opposite pole, and so far he breaks the series; but his talk, though so definite in its cutting, is plain enough; and he too, as will appear, is a describer of life and manners. Through Johnson, as presented by Boswell, we hear the conversation of a whole society. The novelists (Ch. VI.-VIII.) form a natural group. Their dialogue

is, or should be, a ' selection from the real language of men ' ; and we can test its fidelity by asking whether the words of Clarissa, or Roderick, or Amelia Booth, or the Shandys ring as true as those of the memoirs and diaries. In these, however, we must watch for the artificial or concocted styles that may have been caught from stories or dramas. The fiction of the years 1740-1775, taken as a whole, is the richest contribution of the century to the prose of pure literature.

The contribution of comedy (Ch. IX., X.) is much poorer ; but here too there is more truth to life, and more readable and animated talk, than is often supposed. The prose of the comic stage ranges from that of every day to that of excogitated wit and epigram. But these, again, were not merely a thing of the theatre, or of books. We have but to think of Walpole's letters or of the way in which Selwyn or Sheridan is reported to have talked. There are always men to whom points, and twists of language, and literary phrases, are second nature. Each age has its own tricks ; and in eighteenth-century comedy the dialect of ' sentiment,' which it not only shared with the novel but found in actual life, is a peculiar hall-mark.

III

Poetry is introduced, in solemn form, by the tragic muse (Ch. XI.), although sometimes, in the ' domestic drama,' she speaks in prose. The public showed a surprising appetite for tragedies which can hardly now be read and will never again be acted ; and also, be it said, for Shakespeare, if usually in a doctored or adapted form. In the mass of blank verse dramas that were produced there is not much true imagination or knowledge of human nature, and the secrets of the metre are little known ; but there is abundance of theatric skill ; and there is at least the intention of poetry. As in the time of Tennyson and Browning, the lure of the stage attracted many writers, like Thomson and Young, away from their true line. The four chapters (XII.-XV.) on non-dramatic poetry (to which must be added the pages on that of Goldsmith and Johnson, and those (Ch. XVIII.) upon hymnody) may seem to form a small proportion of this book. But there is no need to question the accepted view that the strength of the period lies in prose. It produced much more good prose than good verse ; and the prose is much surer of itself, much more final, than the verse ; its artistic ideals are more distinct and are more fully attained. In verse the summits are few, and it

is hard to say that they rise higher than the highest contemporary prose. It is Law and Berkeley who continue the transcendental strain which almost died out of poetry between Norris of Bemerton and William Blake. Most of the more ambitious verse is visibly in a state of transition. It is the battle-ground of many styles, which, even when they are good in themselves, do not readily mix or harmonise; and often they are not good. Yet this is just what makes eighteenth-century poetry so deeply interesting. It is not merely a medley; it reveals a process. Slowly and irregularly, the older species are displaced by others, which anticipate and announce the inspirations of the next age. This is the familiar 'romantic movement'; but I shall offer reasons hereafter for eschewing as much as possible the terms 'classical' and 'romantic,' and shall prefer to insist upon what poetry lost by this great change, rather than to add a needless tribute to 'romanticism.' Meantime, the poets are difficult to group or classify. Some clue can be found in the various models which they follow, and in the fact that the 'revival,' as it is called, is essentially a *literary* one. Many writers can be grouped, though not strictly, by their allegiance either to Pope, or to Milton and Spenser (Ch. XII.); and these influences are often blended in the same man. The following chapter (XIII.) is inevitably something of a miscellany. It includes some of the crowd of lesser poets who are only now being rediscovered, and whose modest verse is much to be treasured. Then, in the Wartons, Collins, and Gray (Ch. XIV.) there is a certain, though by no means a fully conscious, unity of aim and inspiration. Gray is the greatest and surest artist of his age, with a deeper poetic scholarship than his fellows; and he manages, in a way that is beyond their capacity, to harmonise the different styles upon which he drew. After 1760 many fresh impulses begin to animate poetry (Ch. XV.); and again they come largely from the past. The lyrical strain grew louder in Smart and Chatterton; Percy revived not only the folk-ballad but much old and good forgotten song; and Macpherson's 'Ossian,' though to-day 'a past mode, an outworn theme,' for a time captured the world. All this ferment in prose and verse naturally stimulated criticism, and the extremes of taste and judgment are best seen in Johnson and in Gray. There remain (Ch. XVI.) scattered groups of critics, or individuals—the Scottish academicians, the prosodists, Maurice Morgann, and Sir Joshua Reynolds; but they show no clear perception of the paths along which poetry, or literature as a whole, was

moving. Their best work was in the theory of metre, or in the interpretation of the old masters; and Thomas Tyrwhitt's service to the shade of Chaucer is enduring.

IV

The last four chapters (XVII.-XX.) treat of philosophy, divinity, political thinking, and historical writing, in their relation to letters. Berkeley, Hume, and Law, Burke and Gibbon, are the constellations; they are all great, or very good, writers, and their work belongs to what, for want of a better name, has been called 'applied' literature. Their art, I mean, however remarkable, is an instrument rather than an end. Their aim is to advance thought, or to inculcate sacred truth, or to mould public policy in the light of principle, or to illuminate great spaces of history. 'Pure' literature, on the other hand, is inventive or creative, in poetry, fiction, and the drama; or, as in letters and memoirs, it may be simply descriptive or delineative. Its aim is art, or at least entertainment; and if it fails of this aim it is nothing, or at best a mere document. But a philosopher or historian may be nothing of a writer, and yet a great minister to thought or knowledge. This distinction, however, is only a working one; and the two kinds constantly shade off into each other. The memoir may be a fragment of history; the journal, or article, may be used by the political theorist; and the moral essay may quickly become a sermon or a doctrinal argument. Moreover, there is one element, namely the didactic, that runs through nearly all eighteenth-century writing, whether 'pure' or 'applied,' and makes much of it fatally dull. Poetry is seldom content simply with the expression of beauty; the novel seldom simply represents life, without any moral comment. But it would be mere cant to say that this was of necessity a fault. If the writer is only strong enough, and the fruit is an *Ode to Adversity* or a *Rasselas*, the didactic aim is good and invigorating. The ethical purpose, naturally, is strongest in the divines; with the philosophers it is a definite part, though only a part, of their programme; with the writers on statecraft it may rise to great heights, as it does in Burke; while with the historians it is, in some form, implicit in their judgments.

By good fortune philosophy (Ch. XVII.) found most brilliant and striking expression during this period. The Platonic quality of Berkeley and the French lucidity of Hume carry

their doctrines at once to the minds of the laity, and both these thinkers are European figures. So, with his plainer manner, is Adam Smith; and there are other philosophers, of more strictly insular significance, who also write well. Among the divines (Ch. XVIII.) three names stand out, those of Butler, Law, and John Wesley, the last two of whom are unquestioned men of letters; and the record of both the Wesleys, as composers of hymns, brings us for a moment back to poetry. Literature must also take heed of the deistical authors, although their work disappeared, or at least went underground; and there are other writers, like Middleton and Warburton, principally of historical interest. None of all these but Law can rival the seventeenth-century preachers. But in the divines of the eighteenth there is a rich variety of style and accent, and an intensity of feeling which associates them with the poets.

Political thought and oratory (Ch. XIX.) are naturally dominated by Burke, the greatest English publicist of any age. He belongs to two periods, which are divided by the French Revolution, and he has been noticed in a former *Survey*. He is here reviewed again, but with increased attention to his earlier writings; and his figure, of course, meets us at every turn both in the national life and in the circle of Johnson and Goldsmith. Burke is by no means a writer of assured perfection, but he added many an instrument to the orchestra of prose. In his general massiveness and force of mind as well as in his eloquence, Burke, and Burke almost alone in his generation, recalls the great tradition of Bacon and Hobbes. He gains in stature when contrasted with Bolingbroke his precursor and Junius his contemporary; but each of these is a writer of mark, who perfectly accomplishes his own aim and leaves his trace on the art of prose. Amongst the historians (Ch. XX.), Hume and Robertson enlarged the conception of their craft, which in Britain developed later than any other kind of literature; but only Gibbon left a lasting monument. The fifteen years (1774-1789) before the Revolution were a time of great constructive effort. The long phase of experiment and polemic began to bear fruit. Learning had accumulated quietly, and had also, under the impulse of the 'enlightenment,' become critical. The contempt for the past, so noticeable in the writers of the age of Anne, the self-esteem of the *grand siècle*, and the vanity of the 'Moderns,' had greatly worn down, though they left their trail. A true historical impulse, in its essence scientific, now came to fruition. During those fifteen years appeared the *Decline and Fall*, the *Wealth*

of Nations, and the *Lives of the Poets*; the best orations of Burke were delivered; and Warton's *History of English Poetry*, though of another rank, is not to be forgotten.

Often as it has been done, I will now try to display once more, and in some sort of order, the wealth and variety of this body of literature; and am less concerned to offer new general formulae than to suggest the insufficiency of the old ones. Expressions like the 'age of reason,' or of 'optimism,' or of 'complacency,' seem to be sterile and misleading. Half-true at the best, they linger on because they cannot be directly refuted; but they ought not to survive any fair presentment of the material. Such a record, at any rate, is here attempted, and it opens, as already stated, with a selection from the letters and memoirs.

CHAPTER II

MEMOIRS AND LETTERS

I

Not much of the prose of this period wears better than that of Lord Chesterfield [1] (1694-1773): Philip Dormer Stanhope, the fourth Earl, the opponent of Walpole, ambassador at The Hague, a brilliant negotiator, a just and sagacious Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, an admired orator; and also, according to Onslow [2] the Speaker, 'esteemed the wittiest man of his time, and of a sort that had scarcely been known since the reign of Charles the Second.' After 1750, being pushed out of political power and troubled by deafness, Chesterfield receded from affairs, and betook himself to gardening, reading, and writing. His letters are his monument; he also produced state papers and pamphlets, rhymes, essays, and some *Characters of Eminent Persons*. He was a master of prepared eloquence; his most striking speech in the Lords was against the Playhouse Bill designed to muzzle political allusions on the stage.

Chesterfield wrote lively papers in *Fog's Journal* and elsewhere; the best are in the *World* (Ch. iv.). Two numbers (100 and 101), in praise of Johnson's [3] forthcoming *Dictionary*, provoked the well-known reply. The rights were not all on one side; the so-called 'blow to patronage' is in part a complaint that the patronage (which had never been promised) was belated and futile. Chesterfield, however, had missed his chance of helping a great enterprise. Neither party seems to have borne malice afterwards. The *World* also contains a note which, though not philologically correct, is entertaining. 'I assisted,' says Chesterfield pleasantly, 'at the birth of that most significant word *flirtation*, which dropped from the most beautiful mouth in the world.' Was the speaker that Lady Frances Shirley, so long the Earl's friend, of whom Sir Charles Hanbury Williams wrote:

> there were Chesterfield and Fanny,
> In that eternal whisper which begun
> Ten years ago, and never will be done?

To her Chesterfield is said to have addressed the admirable *Advice to a Lady in Autumn*, 'Asses' milk, half a pint, take at seven, or before.' But Lady Fanny became a convert to Methodism, and joined the flock of Whitefield. The Earl's turn for gallant epigram is also seen in his version of a common fancy. The 'impromptu' on the 'young Jacobite lady dressed with orange ribbons' has something of an older rhythm :

> Say, lovely traitor, where 's the jest
> Of wearing Orange on thy breast,
> While that breast upheaving shows
> The whiteness of the rebel rose ?

Nor is the cadence of the *Riddle* (on 'nothing') to be slighted, or the neatness of the *Answer to the Fools' Petition*.

As a prose writer, Chesterfield learnt what the age of Anne could give him, and he has the weight of mind that we miss in Addison, his admired master. Bolingbroke is also said to have been his model ; but he does not emulate the periods of the *Patriot King*. He resembles, rather, his maternal grandfather Halifax ; practising the epistle, the essay, and the 'character,' and best satisfied when he has reduced his idea to the *atom* of prose, the 'detached thought,' which is the natural medium of wit. In the *World*, inquiring 'who made these *people of fashion* ?', he says, 'I give this short and plain answer : *they made one another*.' He writes to a bishop : 'Has your son taken either orders or a wife yet ? Both these blessings are indelible.' And of a notorious person : 'With submission to my Lord Rochester, God made Dodington the coxcomb he is ; mere human means could never have brought it about.'

Chesterfield also owes much to French, his second tongue, in which he writes easily and thinks constantly. He resorts to French when he is recommending a *commerce galant* to his son ; and the phrases *une honnête débauche*, *un arrangement honnête*, *dégourdir*, *décrotter*, are required to express his meaning. He knew and corresponded with Voltaire, quotes Fontenelle and Montesquieu, and is devoted to La Rochefoucauld. He was read and admired in France, and her historians [1] almost claim him as one of their own writers.

II

The *Letters to his Son* must be studied without too much emphasis on the pages that got Chesterfield a bad name. Written to Philip Stanhope, his illegitimate son by a French

mother, they were published by Philip's widow in 1774. Chesterfield wrote another series to another Philip, a godson and lawful kinsman, who was afterwards to inherit the title. These letters were not printed in full till 1890. A third set is written to the young Earl of Huntingdon. In each case Chesterfield figures as an elder counsellor and pilot through the social quicksands.

Philip, the first Philip, who begins to receive letters at the age of seven, is to have a solid mental equipment; he is to be trained as a courtier, negotiator, and man of the world. French and Italian, in due course, are prescribed, and the much rarer accomplishment of German. A gentleman, too, must be at home in Latin, history and geography, and the outline of law; in the important treaties, and the ranks of the social hierarchy. All these must be known, but not as a pedant knows them. The professional historians, who concoct imposing reasons for events really shaped by some one's vanity or self-importance, are to be distrusted. The Earl thoroughly believes in the power of accident, and in the importance of Cleopatra's nose. Hence the minor passions of men and women must be carefully studied, flattered, and utilised. The pupil will soon be afloat in a world where nothing can be done without this knowledge. At the same time, counsels of honour and severe morality abound. A young man, at the very outset, must 'establish, and really deserve, a character of truth, probity, good manners, and good morals.' A diplomatist, indeed, must dissemble; but lying is disgraceful. Chesterfield is almost passionate in his warnings against vulgar licence, and says that 'a rake is a composition of all the lowest, most ignoble, and most degrading vices.' He warns Philip against deep play, to which he was himself given. He has a horror of drinking; and in the *World* he depicts a toper who 'loves his bottle most *academically*.' He is full of scorn for snobbery; rank and station are facts, but a gentleman has no fear of the 'great.' And manners—not those of a 'dancing-master,' but of the best society,—with all the niceties and graces, no doubt fill in Chesterfield's creed almost the place of charity in that of the apostle; if we have them not, we are nothing. These counsels are the most vivacious thing in the letters. The great code of Courtesy had come down in the world since the time of Castiglione. Speech and silence, dress and the care of the person, the *abord* and the *sortie*, are all regulated. No detail is too nice for notice, or too nasty. There is a complete compendium of the 'minuter decencies and inferior duties.' Chesterfield's gravity over

the business is extreme ; he knows his world, and that it is no light matter to violate the code.

He has also, it is too well known, the courage of his Regency morality ; and his fatherly advice in the matter of Philip's amours, cropping up as a neatly laid and discoloured brick in the educational fabric, has always given cause for scandal. It has drawn the wrath of the moralist and the difficult excuses of admirers ; and also the smiles of Sainte-Beuve, who speaks of the Earl's *morale légèrement gâtée*. Women, in Chesterfield's view, are to be despised, feared, and obeyed ; they minister to pleasure, they promote advancement, and they form the manners. A young man cannot make his way without them. Affection, permanence, chivalry, do not come into the affair. Once, indeed, it is suggested that Philip may allow himself a real passion, or at least *un goût vif* ; but this is only a concession. He had better cultivate a married woman of *ton*, remembering that ' the gallantry of high life, though not strictly justifiable, carries, at least, no external mark of infamy about it.' And the warnings are repeated against ordinary vice. To speak in a Johnsonian antithesis, the Earl warmly censures promiscuity, and coolly recommends intrigue. He can think of no third course ; at any rate not for Philip, or in Paris.

Should the censors, at this time of day, wish to prescribe an antidote to Lord Chesterfield, drawn from his own age, they may of course send us to the *Rambler* : but an even better school may be found in Fielding, whom we are more likely to read. The novelist, indeed, like the nobleman, may be thought too lenient to the sins of the blood ; but in how different a spirit ! Heat and impulse, youth and opportunity—he may be ready to find them an excuse. But he could not have approved of an intrigue conducted in cold blood for ulterior reasons, or have advised diplomacy in friendship. Colonel James, in *Amelia*, after having dealt shabbily by Captain Booth, pays a call on Mrs. Booth hoping to catch her alone ; but instead, he finds Booth free and the family rejoicing. Yet James does not lose countenance ; on the contrary, he professes friendship, being versed

> in that noble art which is taught in those excellent schools called the several courts of Europe. By this, men are enabled to dress out their countenances as much at their own pleasure as they do their bodies, and to put on a friendship with as much ease as they can a laced coat.

We need not say that Chesterfield would have commended the Colonel ; he often, as we have seen, preaches veracity ;

but these are not unlike his precepts, and it is good to escape awhile from his company into a more generous and plebeian world.

Chesterfield is aware of no incongruity between his better and his more callous counsels. Still, he cherishes the decent dream of a father who would have his son inherit all his own virtues and avoid his mistakes. He has a religion; it is the cult of reason; and in this he speaks for his age. It is the gospel according to Mr. Locke, and it is stated in no ignoble terms:

> Use and assert your own reason; reflect, examine, and analyse everything, in order to form a sound and mature judgment; let no οὗτος ἔφα impose upon your understanding, mislead your judgment, or dictate your conversation. Be early what, if you are not, you will, when too late, wish you had been. Consult your reason betimes; I do not say that it will always prove an unerring guide; for human reason is not infallible; but it will prove the least erring guide that you can follow. Books and conversation may assist it; but adopt neither blindly and implicitly; try both by that best rule, which God has given to direct us, Reason. Of all the troubles do not decline, as many people do, that of thinking. [No. 176.]

This is good enough advice; but the speaker also holds, with Locke, that reason may be inscribed upon the tender mind as on a blank sheet of wax. Thus the drawback of his scheme is that it rests on a false view of human nature. Men are born fairly equal in capacity; training is everything; and a human being can be shaped into the creature of a programme. Chesterfield once playfully calls Philip one of his 'books,' a 'small quarto published not quite fourteen years ago,' which has to be revised and corrected. Later he admits sadly that 'perhaps, one cannot change one's nature.' Meantime the crushing scheme had been enforced. Philip did fairly, learnt a good deal, and filled some minor posts quite well; but he married below him, never learned the graces, and died at thirty-six. 'He might have passed well enough through life,' wrote Lord Charlemont,[1] 'if his father had not insisted upon making him a fine gentleman.' We may be glad that he had some power of resistance. The desired bundle of accomplishments would have had no identity; and we should have ended with the question, But where is *Philip*? It is this flaw, and a certain resulting oppressiveness, rather than any looseness of ethics, that makes the letters uncomfortable reading. We may fancy how Chesterfield, if he had heard such an objection, would have ejaculated, 'Good God, Sir!' He would have

shown more contempt than anger; the large, dark, brilliant eyes, his most striking feature, would resume their cold outlook; he would remain true to type.

III

The letters to Philip the godson—'my dear little boy,' 'Sturdy,' '*mon cher petit drôle*'—repeat much of the same advice. They end while the child is still too young to be taught how to make love. The writer is now more playful, and gentler; he is a step nearer to Addison. Tippling, breach of faith, vulgarity, and the pride of wealth are again condemned. Again there is much elementary history, administered through anecdotes. The English is as good as ever; and the best of the letters, a long and grave one, is left to be delivered when the Earl is dead. This godson, the fifth Earl, lived as a country gentleman, probably forgetting his studies, and no doubt remembering his manners. But these, as well as the graces, are taken for granted in the letters to Lord Huntingdon, who is a grown-up young man of the writer's own caste. He calls Chesterfield his adopted father; and his steps are guided, as a traveller, an amorist, a student, and a courtier. He attained the position of Master of the Horse to George Prince of Wales; and receives much advice in his dealings with that 'sulky young gentleman.' He is informed of the true procedure in the rite of 'giving the shirt' to the prince: it is done sometimes by the Groom of the Stole, and sometimes by the Gentlemen of the Bedchamber. And he is told, in one of his mentor's neatest sayings: 'read men and women, but read the latter *unbound* for some years at least.' For the young man's instruction in intrigue, Chesterfield sometimes has to drop into Latin. But there is also pathos in the letters. He is pleased that his friend will write to an 'insignificant, deaf, old fellow,' who feels, in respect of health, 'rather reprieved than pardoned,' and who awaits the last scene without either fears or wishes.

Nothing in all these letters, except their extreme finish, seems to indicate that Chesterfield supposed they might be printed. And the finish may be explained by a long habit of verbal self-discipline. His grammar, certainly, is not pedantic; but he writes,

> It is now above forty years since I have never [*sic*] spoken nor written one single word, without giving myself at least one moment's time to consider, whether it was a good or a bad one, and whether I could not find out a better in its place. An unharmonious and rugged

period, at this time, shocks my ears. . . . Do not neglect your style, whatever language you speak in, or whomever you speak to, were it your footman. Do not content yourself with being barely understood; but adorn your thoughts, and dress them as you would your person.

Evidently, he believes that he can *make*, that he has actually made, his own style and behaviour, as well as those of his pupils. And we must take him as he is, studious, self-conscious, and complete, attaining an ease of which he can never forget the cost. But this was only second nature, and not inborn. In his familiar letters to other friends Chesterfield is more himself; his form is none the worse if it is, as he laments, often 'idle and negligent.' He is at his best when writing to Lady Suffolk. In his youth he sends a mock epistle to her lapdog; and, another, in later years, in the language of his own footman, who describes the master without flattery. The correspondence with Mme. de Monconseil is also informal, if less agreeable, and is to be read beside the letters to Philip. The lady is requested to look after Philip's manners and introduce him to the best company, in the hope of uniting in him all that is *meilleur des deux nations*. She reports faithfully; and, in his next missive to the youth, the father knows where to strike. Yet another set of Chesterfield's letters is official; and these are the main document for his work as a statesman and diplomatist. They are sometimes formal, sometimes more intimate.

The *Characters of Eminent Persons* show more literary artifice, and are fuller of points and epigrams. They contain a mass of first-hand evidence and are of historical value. Chesterfield tries to be fair to Sir Robert Walpole; and he refrains from over-colouring his praise even of his nearest friend, the Earl of Scarborough. He has an affection for Arbuthnot, and only deplores his love of eating. He finds it hard to be just to Queen Caroline; and her husband he dissects in excellent French style, saying that 'he had rather an unfeeling than a bad heart, but I never observed any settled malevolence in him.' And we are made to feel the actual presence of Pitt, before whose intimidating eloquence the 'arms' even of men like Mansfield 'dropped from their hands,' and who had 'a most happy turn to poetry; but he seldom indulged and seldomer avowed it.' How well Chesterfield can write in the graver and more continuous manner, may be seen in his most frequently quoted passage, on the signs in France of 'great changes and revolutions.' It was written in 1753; and two years earlier, in

a letter to Huntingdon, there is an outburst that we hardly expect from the writer :

If they have found out (though late) that kings are not part of the Divinity ; that they are not exactly the images of God upon earth ; that they are neither anointed nor appointed by Him to be the scourges of their fellow-creatures ; that they have no other rights but those of civil and mutual compact ; but that mankind in general have natural and inherent rights which no power on earth can legally deprive them of ; if, I say, they have at last discovered these truths, which by the way are not very abstruse ones, their natural vivacity, and their shame of so long an entertained error, will probably carry them very far the other way.

IV

The historical novelists seem to have neglected the thirteen hundred letters of John Hervey, first Earl of Bristol [1] (1665-1751). He is perhaps the worst writer of his time and rank : grammarless, involved, interminable, full of sanctimonious jargon, and at every point the opposite of Chesterfield. But he has personality, and a vivid scene emerges from his fog of language. The letters written after the death of his first wife are in a strain of frenzied grief. Two years later he remarried, and John the politician, Pope's ' Sporus,' was the eldest child of this union. Lord Bristol's letters to his second wife begin, during many years, with the words ' My ever-new Delight ' ; they are passionate, grotesque, and sincere, and are besprinkled with Latin tags and English rhymes. Then the tone changes ; the lady, unlike her lord, loved gaiety ; and she suffered from hypochondria, becoming fretful and devoted to medicines. From the letters of Lady Hervey, her daughter-in-law, we judge that she was something of a terror to her family. But her affection persisted ; and for a long while she still addresses her husband as ' My dear, dearest Life.' He has cooled, but she remains his friend long after the crabbed egoist has made love impossible. Lord Bristol suffered from an arbitrary temper and from violent revulsions of mood, and had the stiffest views of paternal authority. He was certainly tried by his many children, several of whom went wrong. With the worst of them, Henry, he is at his worst ; and in one letter, by way of consoling Henry for the loss of *his* son, the Earl begins with these words : ' Your grief to me seems so offensively excessive to the great Ruler of Providence. . . .' Henry after many escapades took orders, but still sponged upon his father. Still stranger is a letter

written in the Earl's old age to his adored John. By the first marriage he had had a son, Carr, who had proved unsatisfactory and died young; and he writes (the italics are mine):

> I cannot conceal [1] from you that I am *enthusiastically* enough inclined to imagine, if the dead have any knowledge of what passes here on earth, that his most excellent mother, who *loved me far better than she could love him*, perceiving that he whom she had so often wished might live to give me as much pleasure as he was grown to give me pain, *addressed herself to the throne of Grace to take even her own son to himself*, so that he might make way for *one whom she intuitively knew* would make me almost as completely happy as she had done.

This seems to approach madness; but the writer had some sound qualities; he was liberal and honest, and is mentioned with respect in the memoirs of the time. He lived to see his favourite son John rise in the world, prosper, write, intrigue, and die.

V

John, Lord Hervey [2] (1696-1743), received, while still a boy, a letter from his father praising a retired life,[3] with instances drawn from Horace, Pomponius Atticus, Cicero, and Jean Louis Guez de Balzac. But Hervey's life was not to be in retirement. He was born into a society which he was too clever to like and not strong enough to quit; and some of his virulence may be due to his sense of bondage. He was sickly, and his diet and his paint and his pallor became the theme of the satirists. He is acrid, and deals habitually in what his father calls his 'collateral wipes and squinting innuendoes.' But Pope's overdone character of 'Sporus' [4] and Horace Walpole's sallies have rather obscured his qualities. His mind and also his style are better than might be feared. Though little to be trusted, he remains our most intimate authority for the life of the court and the lobby during the first ten years of George the Second. After many quarrels and changes he threw in his lot with the crown and became a link in the chain by which Walpole held the king. His lodgings were 'just at the foot of the queen's back staircase'; and from this vantage-ground he wrote his *Memoirs*, which extend to the death-bed of Caroline and describe it. It is he who reports the always quoted speech of the king on that occasion: *Non, j'aurai des maîtresses!*

Hervey is skilled in bitter portraiture and in presenting scene

and dialogue. His little play, *The Death of Lord Hervey*, gives the reek of the palace atmosphere: it reproduces the odd English of the queen, the parrot-answers of the ladies, and the brutal good temper of the minister. They all talk in a callous, absent way of the dead Hervey; but behold, he turns up very much alive after all. The *Memoirs* chronicle every movement in the ant-hill: the advice of Walpole to the queen as to the right sort of mistress for the king: or the crowning scandal (told at Richardsonian length), when Frederick Prince of Wales steals his wife away to St. James's for her confinement. Thackeray must have read and liked the speech of the Princess Emily, whom her father had been boring with a tale of his bravery on board ship:

'. . . In the first place, I am sick to death of hearing of his great courage every day of my life; in the next place, one thinks now of Mama, and not of him. Who cares for his old storm? I believe, too, it is a great lie, and that he was as much afraid as I should have been, for all what he says now; and as to his not being afraid when he was ill, I know that is a lie, for I saw him, and I heard all his sighs and his groans, when he was in no more danger than I am at this moment. He was talking, too, for ever of dying, and was sure that he would not recover.' All this, considering the kind things she had heard the King say the minute before, when he imagined her asleep, Lord Hervey thought a pretty extraordinary return to make for that paternal goodness, or would have thought it so in anybody but her; and looked upon this openness to him whom she did not love, yet less to be accounted for, unless he could have imagined it was to draw him in to echo her, and then to relate what he said as if he had said it unaccompanied.

Though malignant, Hervey is not servile; he talks the court language while on duty, but stands up to the queen and the minister. In the main he is a spectator, or chorus: one of those, he says, who 'saw everything that was done, and made their own comments upon the scene.' All the cast sit to him unawares: Pulteney, Bolingbroke, Chesterfield, and Lyttelton; and also Mrs. Howard, Mrs. Clayton, and Mrs. Deloraine. Some of his 'characters' anticipate the manner of Junius. They always need confirmation; but, as Croker, his editor, pointed out, they often receive it from Horace Walpole and others. His view of human nature is of the meanest; but his English arrests attention. An odd mixture of the loose and the elaborate, it is never without point. Pope hit on its blemish in the phrase 'one vile antithesis.' Some passages, written before 1737, are an early example of the new Latinising manner. Bolingbroke

is ' elate and insolent in power, dejected and servile in disgrace . . . one to whom prosperity was no advantage, and adversity no instruction.' Usually Hervey is more natural and conversational, and has the art of throwing in some milder strokes in order to make the effect more damaging. The name of Sir William Yonge was, he writes (with a turn of phrase that recalls Thackeray),

proverbially used to express everything pitiful, corrupt, and contemptible. It is true he was a great liar, but rather a mean than a vicious one. He had been always constant to the same party ; he was good-natured and good-humoured—never offensive in company ; nobody's friend—nobody's enemy.

VI

George Bubb Dodington,[1] latterly Lord Melcombe of Regis (1691-1762), is remembered as the very type of the politician who is up for sale ; but his ties with literature deserve a mention. His liking for men of letters was genuine in its way. He won the innocent admiration of Thomson, who wrote to him from Italy and dedicated to him *Summer* in florid terms (' Stoop to my theme, inspirit every line '). In his mansion at Eastbury Voltaire and Young talked at one another. Dodington patronised and entertained writers ; and a copy of his rhymes, marked by his peculiar mixture of cynicism and sanctimony, ' Love thy country, wish it well, Not with too intense a care,' is still quoted. His *Diary* (1784) of the years 1749 to 1761 is a classic specimen of self-exposure, written without any sense of the necessity for shame. He changed sides three times ; it was no fault of his if he was not purchased oftener ; and he reminds us of an insect crawling up a slimy surface and reaching the top after many falls. He sat for Pope's ' Bubo,' and for the first sketch of his ' Bufo.' In a well-known print of 1741, *The Motion*,[2] he appears as a ' spaniel cur,' sitting between the feet of the Duke of Argyll, the driver of the Opposition coach which is overturning. Dodington describes his intimacy with Frederick Prince of Wales ; how the gang met in order to portion out in advance the loot that was expected ' on the demise of the king ' —which in fact was to be long delayed ; how he bargained with Walpole, offering the votes of four or five ' independent gentlemen ' ; and again, in a spirit for once humane, how he sat with the Prince's family in the evening, ' talking of familiar occurrences,' and that ' with the ease and unreservedness and unconstraint, as if one had dropped into a sister's house that had a

family.' From this strange witness we learn that the Hanoverian court had its natural and peaceful side.

Hervey and Dodington leave a certain taste in the mouth ; and to remove it, we can turn to the memoirs of two honest and discreet, if less lively, public men. There are some pointed ' characters ' of Pitt and of the king, and many curious notices of the political world, in the *Memoirs* (1754-1758) of the second Earl Waldegrave. The Duke of Newcastle, the general butt, is one of his subjects ; and the diarist observes that ' as to his jealousy, it could not be carried to a higher pitch, if every political friend was a favourite mistress.' Waldegrave was the unwilling ' governor ' of the future George the Third, whom he well portrays. His descriptions are carefully finished, and he might, had he cared, have made his mark in letters. Another chronicler is Viscount Perceval,[1] who became the first Earl of Egmont. A close friend of Berkeley, an associate of Oglethorpe in the settlement of Georgia, and a man of credit, Perceval was well regarded by both parties. His notes cover the years 1730 to 1747 ; and he was a born taker of notes. He sets down long conversations and debates with the precision, though not with the art, of Boswell. He seems to think all facts of equal interest. The result is solid reading, of use to the historian ; but there are also traits and stories to lighten the way. There are references to Butler, to Carteret, and to Handel. Perceval relates how Chesterfield, on being harassed by a person who was touting for a peerage, replied that the request was *unconstitutional* ; and why ? because ' the King can do no wrong.' And of Caroline he remarks, for once unfairly, that she was ' an encourager of learned men, as far as *countenance* goes.' But his record warns us, once more, not to inveigh too cheaply against the venal Walpolian era.

VII

Most of the *Wentworth Papers*,[2] which interest alike the man of letters, the historian, and the phonetician, belong to the former age ; but they cover also the first twelve years of George the Second. They consist of the correspondence of Thomas Wentworth, Lord Raby, who became third Earl of Strafford in 1711. He had been ambassador at Berlin and The Hague, had helped to make the peace of Utrecht, had narrowly escaped impeachment afterwards, had been concerned in the Jacobite counsels, and had retired on his estates. The letters are many-faceted, and bring before us the whole life of a great family.

Some of the earliest and best are written by Lord Raby's mother, Lady Isabella Wentworth. She pictures little domestic affairs, and writes a heartrending note on the death of her pet dog, 'Fubs'; and this warm-hearted lady presents herself to perfection, as she signs herself 'your moste infenitt affectionat Mother.' Lady Strafford is not less engaging, with her valediction, 'Adieue my dear life and sol, all happiness ever attend you,' and with her stream of home news and gossip. The daughters Lady Anne and Lady Lucy, and their brother, are entirely duteous, in youth as well as in childhood. A mass of letters on social and public affairs comes from Peter Wentworth, Strafford's brother, who was an equerry at the court of Caroline. A somewhat flunkeyish, but acute and watchful person, he might have risen higher but for an attachment, which he was always hoping to abandon, to the bottle. He tells us much of the queen and of her last days. It is Peter who reports the story that she said to Ranby the surgeon, when he was about to operate, 'Before you begin, let me have a full view of your comical face.' Ranby wished for a divorce; and the patient is said to have continued, 'What would you give now, that you was cutting your wife?' Caroline, it is clear, had courage, and a somewhat rasping wit; and more will be said in the next chapter of her intellectual pastimes. We also learn from Peter how she sang a song, 'agreeably and good-humouredly,' to Sir Robert Walpole. One of Lord Strafford's best correspondents is Lord Bathurst, the friend of Pope, who was to live until 1775, and to receive, in one of the longest and most splendid sentences in the language, the tribute of Burke.[1] Younger than Strafford, Lord Bathurst sends him respectful warnings to be careful of his health, and reproaches him for 'venturing upon a skittish colt'; and one sentence gives the very spirit of a patrician landowner who has taken thought for posterity and looked after his 'old hereditary trees':

> I do not think any air so good as that where a man of taste has laid out his works himself; there is certainly more pleasure in riding about woods which have been cut and modelled by one's own contrivance and fancy, and through avenues of one's own planting, than in any others whatsoever.

The language of rank and wit in this period is easier to recognise than to describe. Hervey and Horace Walpole impose their own idiom on a kind of polite *lingua franca*, the tone of which is well seen in a miscellany like the *Suffolk Correspondence*.[2] This consists of the letters written by, and to, Henrietta Howard (born Hobart), Countess of Suffolk (*c.* 1681-1767), traditionally [3]

the mistress of the king, Pope's 'Chloe,' and also Pope's friend —'a reasonable woman.' After leaving her servitude at court, and being now widowed, she married the Hon. George Berkeley. In these letters we listen not only to performers like Pope and Bolingbroke, but to a mob of ladies and gentlemen who employ something of a common speech, belonging to their caste. Its grammar is not strict; it is very mannerly, very ceremonious, and, if the word may pass, very *third-personal*; also very arrogant, under its rigid forms. Sometimes it breaks out into a certain crudity, for which asterisks are now supplied; or, more often, into innuendo, which is dispensed from that resource. Also, since good nature and feeling survive somewhere in every society, there are simple and cheerful interludes. The women on the whole write better than the men, because less precisely. We read with pleasure the letters of Ann, the sister of William Pitt; of Mary Bellenden, Mrs. Campbell, the toast and beauty; and of her friend, Lady Hervey, Molly Lepell, 'youth's youngest daughter.' Lady Suffolk herself is neither brilliant nor tedious. She held her own, if the tale be true, with Queen Caroline in one of the most surprising of dialogues;[1] and her letters to Berkeley breathe a true affection:

I hope you may be able to give us as edifying and as amusing an account of your travels as I have done of all these great affairs, if the want of spruce beer has not impaired your understanding as much as the use of that and of the waters has enlivened mine. But whether I really am sprightly or dull, sick or well, pleased or displeased, I am truly and sincerely yours . . .

After this, the artifice of Pope and the inflated compliments of Lord Peterborough ring somewhat hollow. But Lord Bathurst reappears, with his plainer and more genuine manner; and also Gay, concocting playful letters with the Duchess of Queensberry. Here, too, and in the *Dropmore Papers*, can be seen the youthful style of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham,[2] with little of the rhetoric that afterwards beset it. His love-letters to his Lady Hester Grenville, whom he afterwards married, are extant, with her replies; and a genuine passion, on either side, makes its way through the dignified language. The *Chatham Correspondence*[3] shows that it lasted. In 1765 Chatham writes to his wife:

I have no pain worth mentioning but to have been separated from my kind love, and not seeing five little faces which for me are, with her, a group which sums all delight, all which my heart can taste.

The impression is completed by the letters of his younger daughter, the favourite sister of William Pitt, Lady Harriot Eliot, who died before her thirtieth year. They are unspoilt, and charming after a course of cynical great dames or learned ladies. Lady Harriot had been taught Latin at home with her brothers, but it did her English no harm. She disliked going to Lady Miller's Thursdays at Batheaston (Ch. III.), where so many culture-mongers were assembled. She writes freely to her mother, when dreading an offer from a certain Mr. Cocks:

> I fancy I shall certainly hear no more of him. If I do, it must come to a direct refusal, which however I had rather it did not, as I don't think that could be very pleasant: but I believe I certainly shall not have that trouble. I was not a little *bored* with it, as it was; but, as I felt myself that he will not think of me any more, I have now only to hope that, notwithstanding Mr. Cocks must be considered a very good *parti*, that you will not disapprove of what I have done: and that, without laying stress on *certain prepossessions* of mine, you will allow . . .

Later came her brief marriage. The demurs of Mr. Eliot's father seem to have been silenced by a letter of withering courtesy from William Pitt the younger. Lady Harriot was a loyal sister, rejoicing in his greatness and his parliamentary triumphs.

VIII

In another part of the stage, there are the figures of the serene old rakes, such as that almost fabulous peer, the fourth Duke of Queensberry; of lighter souls, like George James, or 'Gilly,' Williams, the *papillon* of his company; and of George Selwyn,[1] probably in his own day accounted more of a wit than his friend Horace Walpole; but the finding is now reversed. They were easy, copious correspondents; we can still hear their strange insolent voices; and, at the worst, they can teach us English. Beside the reprobate 'Old Q.,' when he compares the claims of two of his mistresses, an elder and a younger, upon his attention, even Chesterfield sounds formal. We must own that Selwyn's letters, and what a satirist in the *Diaboliad* calls his 'fabricated jests,' are now lacking in piquancy. He had no literature, and hardly read a book; but he was a good friend, and his letters to the little 'Mie Mie' (born Fagniani, and one day to be Marchioness of Hertford) have a tenderness and humanity that we miss in Walpole. His circle included

Hanbury Williams, Henry and Charles James Fox, and, chief of all, the fifth Earl of Carlisle, the guardian of Byron, who attacked him so ferociously in print. Byron himself belonged in spirit to this jaunty society that had passed away. The word *bore*, though still written in italics, begins to be heard on their lips, and expresses the ebb of their spirits in the intervals of wine, women, cards, riband-hunting, party politics, and travel. It is used by Voltaire[1] in a letter of the year 1760, written in English : 'Adieu, sir, I bore you ; but I love you with all my heart.' We cannot apply the words to this band of associates; they are not there to be loved, but certainly they seldom bore us.

IX

Horatio or Horace,[2] the youngest son of Sir Robert Walpole, was born in 1717 and died in 1797. His letters, after his boyhood, begin in the last years of his father's ministry ; and he lived to condemn the execution of Louis XVI. He had seen the issue of Pope's *Imitations of Horace* ; he almost saw that of *Lyrical Ballads*. When seventy-seven, he thanked William Roscoe for his book on Lorenzo de' Medici. Meantime he watched from his stall the long pageant of history, society, and letters ; and he left his commentary upon it, without retaining any illusion as to his own share in events, or as to the nature of his talent. In 1794 he wrote :

> Youth, great spirits, vanity, some flattery (for I was a Prime Minister's son), had made me believe I had some parts, and perhaps I had some, and on that rock I split ; for how vast the difference between some parts and genius, original genius, which I confess is so supremely my admiration ; and so honest is my pride (for that I never deny), that, being conscious of not being a genius, I do not care a straw in what rank of mediocrity I may be placed.

It may save some mistakes to let Walpole strike this note for himself. His sincerity, which has betrayed him to hostile critics, also enables us to correct them.

> I always want to begin acting like a man, and a sensible one, which I think I might be if I would. . . . If I ever felt much for anything (which I know may be questioned) it was certainly for my mother [1744]. . . . So sensible of my fickleness that I am sometimes tempted to keep a diary of my mind, as people do of the weather. Today you see it temperate—tomorrow it may again blow politics and be stormy—for while I have so much quicksilver

left, I fear my passionometer will be susceptible of sudden changes [1758]. . . . [On the death of his friend Chute] It is a heavy blow; but strokes reconcile oneself to parting with this pretty vision, life! What is it, when one has no longer those to whom one speaks as confidentially as to one's own soul? Old friends are the great blessing of one's latter years—half a word conveys one's meaning. . . . Alas! alas! and how *self* presides even in our grief! I am lamenting myself, not him!—no, I am lamenting my other self. Half is gone; the other half remains solitary [1776]. . . . [Lady Ossory has shown his letters] Pray send me no more such laurels, which I desire no more than their leaves when decked with a scrap of tinsel and stuck on twelfth-cakes that lie on the shop-boards of pastry-cooks at Christmas. I shall be quite content with a sprig of rosemary thrown after me when the parson of the parish commits my dust to dust. Till then, pray, madam, accept the resignation of your ancient servant [1797]. . . . For the few whose friendship I would wish, I would fain have them see, that under all the idleness of my spirits there are some very serious qualities, such as warmth, gratitude, and sincerity [1760].

These are texts to bear in mind when we read Macaulay's hostile demonstration. Macaulay wrote long before the full material was available; but even had he known it all, he would not have tolerated Walpole's half-hearted and personal politics, and would still have mistaken his flexibility, his chameleon habit of mind, for insincerity. Some of his charges, doubtless, hold good. Walpole *is* full of mischief, petulance, and injustice, yet he is always true to his mood, not caring what may be thought of it, or what he may presently think of it himself.

From partiality to me you won't allow my letters to be letters. Jesus! It sounds as if I wrote them to be fine, and to have them printed, which might be very well for Mr. Pope, who, having wrote pieces carefully, which ought to be laboured, could carry off the affectation of having studied things which have no excuse but their being wrote flying.

Prejudice for prejudice, he is not much more unfair than Johnson, though we need not compare the two in calibre. He can never be so well known or so well liked as Johnson. For Walpole has no Boswell except himself; and his record, in his three thousand and odd letters, is less portable than Boswell's. Nor is it a work of art composed at leisure round a central figure, but a chronicle made from hour to hour. Yet no document of the time so well balances, completes, and rivals Boswell's work. The scene is laid not in Bolt Court or Streatham or Ashbourne, but in Twickenham and Arlington Street and the *salon* of Mme

du Deffand. Some of the players are wits and men of letters, but the main cast is drawn from the dwellers in the great Whig world and its mansions. The bourgeois and common people seem hardly to exist, save when they figure in an anecdote, a scandal, or a criminal process. Johnson's housemate, Poll Carmichael, whose talk was not 'categorical,' would hardly have been noticed by Walpole unless she had been hanged or tried. Once, in company of a lady, he is robbed of nine guineas by a highwayman at Twickenham Park. Walpole judges from the man's bearing that he must have been a 'gentleman,' since he 'declared himself much obliged, pulled off his hat, wished us good night'; and he himself lies firmly, also like a gentleman, about the watch which he keeps safely tucked under his arm. The lady gave the man 'a purse with only bad money, that I carry on purpose.' Again, Johnson and Walpole are bored in different ways. Johnson is troubled and weary in temperament and conscience; Walpole, in 1743, observes 'they say that there is no English word for *ennui*'; and to his horror of this pest, perhaps, we owe some of his easiest writing.

He has no belief in the craze of the time for generalities, abstractions, and didactics. He is like Blake, if in nothing else, still in his passion for 'minute particulars'—'the minutiae,' he says, 'of which I have observed posterity is most fond.' In the letters, reflections bulk small by the side of things seen and heard. The casual sparkle and flying lights of life, these he captures, these he saves for our entertainment. The result, to adapt a phrase of his own, is 'a baby Vauxhall, illuminated with a million little lamps of various colours.' Tales, descriptions, portraits, good sayings, backstairs information, the pomp of the world, and the trivialities lying behind it: all these, Walpole is ready to believe, are the things that console us for having to read formal history:

> I wish I could have sight of all the trifling passages that he [Hume] will not deign to admit into History. I do not love great folks till they have pulled off their buskins and put on their slippers, because I do not care sixpence for what they would be thought, but for what they are.

Macaulay and Carlyle, each in his fashion, were to continue this attack upon the dignity of history. Walpole admired Gibbon for weaving in many anecdotes, and for providing light relief by 'trifling passages.'

X

The letters come nearest to regular *mémoires pour servir* when they describe the trial of the rebel lords in 1746, or the end of Byng or of George the Second, or the Gordon riots, or the parting of Fox and Burke. Some of these events reappear in Walpole's various *Memoirs*, which are much more deliberately written. But the letters are also a companion to the *State Trials* and the *Newgate Calendar*. Walpole's chief rival as a pictorial reporter is Charles Dickens, who is still the foremost in that profession. Both of them cherish an eager interest in crime ; Walpole as a spectator, Dickens as a melodramatist and analyst. Both are born describers. Walpole tells the stories of Handsome Tracy and Burdett the sharper, and Ferrers the murderer, and Hackman the assassin of Miss Ray. And we can read how Mrs. Rudd would not trust her attorney with her case, and yet, by her ' artful interrogatories,' won it ; and how, whilst ordering some brocaded silks from a mercer, and perceiving the man's fear for his money, if she should be hanged (' as was probable '), tactfully paid him in advance. The visits of the wits to the Cock Lane Ghost, or of Walpole to a tasteless great house ; the fancy of George Selwyn for inspecting corpses and burial-grounds ; the trial for bigamy of Elizabeth Chudleigh, Duchess of Kingston so-called ; Vauxhall, Ranelagh, the interiors of the clubs : all these scenes succeed swiftly, but never too swiftly for a distinct impression. Drink and play figure everywhere, and, not least, bets :

A good story made on White's : a man dropped down dead at the door, was carried in ; the club immediately made bets whether he was dead or not ; and when they were going to bleed him, the wagerers for his death interposed, and said it would affect the fairness of the bet.

The moods and topics of the letters are much the same throughout, but the emphasis varies with the course of the years. Four periods may be broadly distinguished. The first includes the grand tour on which Gray and Walpole started in 1739 : the Chartreuse and its landscape, Italy with its manners and sights and monuments. Youthful spirits, and a certain light hard insolence, pervade, it must be said, the letters of both the companions, and help us to understand their quarrel. But there are also the fresh senses of the traveller, rejoicing to be terrified by the mountains ; and Walpole is seen holding at arm's length a more dreadful object still : ' I literally seem to have murdered a man whose name was Ennui, for his ghost is

ever before me.' The second phase may be taken to last to the end of the reign of George the Second. Walpole came home in 1741, and at first was often at Houghton, the family seat, solacing his ennui by cataloguing its art treasures. The chief events, and those which call out his best descriptive powers, are the fall, retirement, and death of his father, and then the Forty-Five. He was now in the Commons, and in the full tide of correspondence. Among his chief friends were George Selwyn, George Montagu, Henry Seymour Conway, afterwards a field-marshal; and Sir Horace Mann, with whom he had formed a friendship in Italy, and who was British envoy at Florence. Walpole continued to write to him during forty-five years; and to the existence, and indeed to the absence, of Mann we owe many of the best letters, and something like a connected diary of events. In 1747 Walpole made his great migration to Strawberry Hill[1] at Twickenham. His house and museum, along with his letters, may be regarded as his chief work of art, and as the mirror of his mind and taste. The construction and contents of Strawberry have been described by himself and by many students. Artifice, gimcracks, too many *bibelots*, a timidly rebellious Gothic: yes, but also many precious things, a real sense of beauty, and a courageous revolt against the ruling canons. Strawberry was soon famous, and much visited, and did more than books could do to educate the public taste. It is greatly due to Walpole that the word 'Gothic,' however slowly, ceased to be disparaging. He is never so truly a 'romantic' as when he sits in his studiously 'natural' garden, 'in the height of its greenth, blueth, gloomth, and honeysuckle-and-seringahood.' The press, *Officina Arbuteana*, set up in 1757, issued Gray's two great *Odes*, the *Life of Lord Herbert of Cherbury*, and other books of note, including some of Walpole's own. To these years also belong his papers in the *World*, the *Letter of Xo Ho*, some of his best light verses (*Fugitive Pieces*, 1758), and the *Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors* (1758).

During the third phase (1760-1785) many of his other books were published. They include *Anecdotes of Painting in England* (1762-3, 1780); the *Catalogue of Engravers* (1763); the *Historic Doubts* concerning Richard the Third (1768); *The Castle of Otranto* (1764); and *The Mysterious Mother* (1768), Walpole's tragedy. Meantime the public show becomes livelier than ever, and there are many new performers: the king, and the king's men, and Burke, and Charles Fox. The letters are now more political; and Walpole, true to the better Whig tenets, is horrified at the statesmanship that has lost

America. His great new friendship, which has been well called 'strange, distressful, and tenacious,' with the blind Parisian lady, Mme du Deffand,[1] begins; and her letters to him, covering many years, have been published. He kept a vivid journal of his successive visits to Paris, which began in 1765. Meantime came the death of Gray in 1771, and in 1778 that of Chatham. In the next year Walpole migrated to Berkeley Square. After about 1785 the tone changes; it is the last phase. The language is more sententious; 'ennui' intrudes more and more, and a new melancholy: one, indeed, which wears a good face and is never tiresome to *us*, but which is deep and unaffected. Walpole lived to muse upon the Revolution and its sequel. At heart he is a pacifist, hating bloodshed even in the best of causes, and doubting whether any cause which involves it can be good. When he takes sides it is with Burke and not with Fox:

> *How long* the French remained in the right at the beginning of the Revolution, may be a question—if they are so still, and if the butchery of 4000 prisoners, men and women, untried, is a necessary and common consequence of reformation or self-defence—mercy on me! I shall be persuaded that I am more than *half* superannuated, for I certainly cannot beat any such horrible opinion into the head of my Whiggism. I know I have always been a coward on points of religion and politics.

We also have his opinion of the Reformation. He remarks that if he had been Luther, convinced of his cause, and yet foreseeing,

> and perhaps he ought to have foreseen, that in order to save the souls of as many unborn millions as you please, I should be the occasion of spilling the blood—come, I will be moderate, and say of only 300,000 living persons—I should have boggled, and nothing but a very palpable angel indeed, with a most substantial commission from heaven, would have persuaded me to register my patent in the chancery of my conscience, and set about the business.

At other times he moralises, never flatly, on his great age, and basks in the rays that are shed over it by a new and double friendship. To the sisters Agnes and Mary Berry some of his most humane letters are addressed. He remained fresh in heart, under the surface, through his long journey. In 1791 he became, to his wry amusement, the Earl of Orford. To the last he finds room for a story. We hear, in 1794, how the aged Bishop of Chichester was strangely visited at four in the morning in his bedchamber. 'A female figure, all in white, entered and sat down near him'; was silent when spoken to, and 'took some

papers out of the ghost of its pocket, and began to read them to itself.' The prelate rang the bell in vain, and the thing departed 'sedately.' No one believed his tale, but it was true. The ghost was an escaped lunatic, who, so its keeper deposed, 'was always reading a bundle of papers.'

XI

Walpole notices, however lightly, almost every writer of mark in his own century, and many of the classics besides. He pronounces upon Homer and Virgil, Shakespeare and Milton, Dryden and Congreve and Pope, Thomson and Gray, Fielding and Sterne, Chatterton and 'Ossian,' Churchill and Chesterfield, Boswell and Johnson and Goldsmith. At the age of nineteen he is found quoting from *The Spleen*, by Matthew Green. At twenty-six he judges Berkeley's *Siris*: 'all the women read, and understand it no more than they would if it were intelligible.' In 1750 he remarks of the *Analogy of Religion* that Queen Caroline 'could never make my father read the book, and which [*sic*] she certainly did not understand herself.' Nor, certainly, did Horace Walpole. Over these deep waters, where there are no trout for him, he flits like a lively, brilliant kingfisher. Hearing John Wesley preach, he notices that he 'acted very ugly enthusiasm.' Reading the published prayers of Johnson, he compassionates, almost with tears, but also with scorn, the scruples of the devotee. 'So anile,' he says, 'was Johnson's faith.' But he adds, with a good sense that has far-reaching applications, *How foolish might we all appear, if we registered every delirium!* How many a 'confession,' how much modern fiction, is exposed to this sane remark! Again, little as Walpole likes Dr. Johnson, his judgment is not wholly prejudiced. It is amusing to see him slip into the balanced style himself:

> There is meaning in almost everything Johnson says; he is often profound, and a just reasoner—I mean, when prejudice, bigotry, and arrogance do not cloud or debase his logic. . . . I have allowed, and do allow, that most of his words have an adequate, and frequently an illustrating purport. . . . [His words] form a hardness of diction and a muscular toughness that resist all ease and graceful movement. Every sentence is as high-coloured as any . . . he illustrates till he fatigues, and continues to prove, after he has convinced. This fault is so usual with him, he is so apt to charge with different set [*sic*] of three phrases of the same calibre, that if I did not condemn his laboured coinage of new words, I would call his threefold inun-

dation of synonymous expressions, *triptology*. . . . If he attempts humour, he makes your reason smile, without making you gay. . . . It is the clumsy gambol of a lettered elephant. We wonder that so grave an animal should have strayed into the province of the ape; yet admire that practice should have given the bulky quadruped so much agility.

With Burke he is more at home, and justly prefers the second American oration to the first: 'it is grave, solid, temperate, and chaster from exuberant imagery.' Later we find him confirming Burke's impression of Marie Antoinette, and in similar language. He himself had seen her as she

shot through the room like an aerial being, all brightness and grace, and without seeming to touch earth—*vera incessu patuit dea*.

Walpole saw the greatness of the *Decline and Fall*, though he did not like its 'sedulously enamelled style'; and he shared with Chesterfield, before Gibbon wrote, the belief that the age of the Antonines was the happiest in human history.

XII

He has, however, more to say about pure literature; and here, though he has no principles, he has preferences; and they are constant, not the whim of the weary moment. He accepts, like Johnson, many of the current legends. He seems to hold that, apart from Shakespeare and Milton, English art and taste were barbarous before the coming of Dryden:

Virgil, Homer, Boileau, Corneille, Racine, Pope, exploded the licentiousness that reigned before them. . . . Before Addison and Swift style [in prose] was scarce aimed at even by our best authors.

There is nothing original in this view; but we can piece together other sayings which enable us to discover Walpole's own literary canon.

Milton certainly made a new English language; and Shakespeare, always greater than any man, has actually formed a style for Caliban that could suit no other kind of being. . . . I had rather have written the two speeches of Lady Percy, in the second part of *Henry IV.*, than all Voltaire, though I admire the latter infinitely. . . . Nature is inexhaustible, and genius can achieve anything. We have a language far more energic, and more sonorous too, than the French. Shakespeare could do what he would with it in its unpolished form. Milton gave it pomp from the Greek, and softness from the Italian: Waller now and then, here and there, gave it the elegance of the French. Dryden poured music into it; Prior gave it ease; and Gray used it masterly for either elegy or terror.

His own private ideal, if a limited, is not an unworthy one ; it is something more than elegance, or finish, or the ' close, naked, natural way of speaking.' His ideal is *grace*. He almost reminds us of Fénelon praising the tender passages in Terence and Virgil. True, he thinks that Dryden conferred grace on Chaucer by the *Fables* ; but his conception of the quality is none the worse for that. It is, he says, ' a perfume ' ; it will save a work

from putrefaction, and is distinct even from style, which regards expression. *Grace*, I think, belongs to *manner*. . . . That graceful manner of thinking in Virgil seems to me more than style, if I do not refine too much. . . . A style may be excellent without grace ; for instance, Dr. Swift's. . . . The Grecians had grace in everything. . . . Milton's tenderness imprints ideas as graceful as Guido's Madonnas [1785].

No other critic of the time puts the case so clearly. Walpole thinks that the *Aeneid* is saved by grace ; and is always telling us, what many believe in their hearts, that as a story it is a tedious, ill-conceived affair. His superstitions do not include the cult of the epic form :

An epic poem is a mixture of history without truth, and of romance without imagination. We are well off when from that *mésalliance* spring some bastards called episodes, which are lucky enough to resemble their romantic mother, more than their solemn father.

His other ideal is a sound one, though he constantly violates it himself ; it is simplicity. And he has besides an ' aversion ' to ' tame poetry.' He prefers, in the spirit of Longinus, the ' extravagant beauties of Shakespeare and Milton to the cold and well-disciplined merit of Addison, and even to the sober and correct march of Pope.' This is all to the good ; yet he has little or no feeling for the progress of contemporary poesy. Probably our own judgments of contemporaries are just as blind. But he shows no sign of appreciating Collins or the ballads. Like Johnson, he is little of a prophet, and in the year 1784 is heard lamenting the decay of song. Gray, for Walpole, marks the summit of English verse in their own day. But even over Gray he does not lose his head, and his judgment on the great ode is discriminating, although he does not know that *orient* comes from Dante and Milton :

The description of Shakespeare is worthy Shakespeare ; the account of Milton's blindness, though perhaps not strictly defensible, is very majestic. The character of Dryden's poetry is as animated as what it paints. I can even like the epithet *orient* ; as the East is the

empire of fancy and poetry, I would allow its livery to be erected into a colour. I think *blue-eyed pleasures* is allowable. . . . I am far from thinking either piece perfect, though, with what faults they have, I hold them in the first rank of genius and poetry. . . . The *Eton Ode* is perfect.

In prose, he prefers the comedy of wit. In the *Thoughts on Comedy* his chosen pattern is Congreve, whom no one has praised better, and whose cast of what he well calls 'ungovernable' wit may perhaps have affected his own :

Congreve is undoubtedly the most witty author that ever existed. Though sometimes his wit seems the effort of intention, and, though an effort, never failed ; it was so natural, that if he split it into ever so many characters, it was a polypus that soon grew perfect in each individual. We may blame the universality of wit in all his personages, but nobody can say which ought to have less. It assimilated with whatever character it was poured into ; and, as Congreve would certainly have had wit into whatever station of life he had been born ; as he would have made as witty a footman or old lady, as a fine gentleman ; his gentlemen, ladies old or young, his footmen, nay his coxcombs (for they are not fools but puppies) have as much wit, and wit as much their own, as his men of most parts and best understandings. No character drops a sentence that would be proper in any other mouth. . . . We want breath or attention to follow their repartees ; and are so charmed with what everybody says, that we have not leisure to be interested in what anybody does. . . . We even do not believe that a company who seem to meet only to show their wit, can have any other object in view. Their very vices seem affected, only to furnish subject for gaiety ; . . . For these reasons, though they are something more, I can scarce allow Congreve's to be true comedies. No man would be corrected, if sure that his wit would make his vices or ridicules overlooked.

It is unlucky for Walpole that he should have contemned both Aristophanes and also *She Stoops to Conquer* ; and we ask, what critic could recover from such a fall ? But the answer is, Walpole ; who has, perhaps, furnished his own best epitaph in the praise that he gives to his favourite, Saint-Evremond : he is a man who 'thought what he liked, not liked what he thought.' His account of English tragedy, in the 'postscript' to the *Mysterious Mother*, shows well enough his habit of 'thinking what he liked,' of throwing dates to the winds, of missing out what he does not care to know, and of getting near the truth :

Theatric genius lay dormant after Shakespeare ; waked, with some bold and glorious but irregular and often ridiculous flights in Dryden ; revived in Otway ; maintained a placid pleasing kind of dignity in Rowe, and even shone in his *Jane Shore*. It trod in

sublime and classic letters in *Cato*, but was void of nature, or the power of affecting the passions. In Southerne it seemed a genuine ray of nature and Shakespeare; but, falling on an age still more Hottentot, was stifled in those gross and barbarous productions, tragi-comedies. It turned to tuneful nonsense in the *Mourning Bride*; grew stark mad in Lee, whose cloak, a little the worse for wear, fell on Young; but, with both, was still a poet's cloak. It recovered its senses in Hughes and Fenton, who were afraid it should relapse, and accordingly kept it down with a timid but amiable hand —and then it languished. We have not mounted again above the two last.

XIII

The Mysterious Mother,[1] the most ambitious and singular of Walpole's inventions, shows, no doubt, his ignorance of his own powers. A double incest is one of the themes which—with every wish to judge a work of art purely by the event—we may safely call impossible. It would, at least, demand a genius greater than John Ford's. Walpole not only makes the experiment, but proceeds to justify it on first principles. He argues that the canons have been duly kept, that pity and terror are aroused, and that virtue and vice are contrasted in the same character. He also introduces a peculiarly villainous Roman priest, whose machinations involve an innocent couple in the second of the two crimes. This Benedict is perhaps the first, and certainly the worst, of the dummy ecclesiastics who were to haunt the 'novel of terror.' In one of the oddest scraps of poetic theory on record, the author tells us that Benedict is 'planned to divide the indignation of the audience, and intercept some of it from the Countess.' The verse, which is full of Elizabethan echoes, is often flat, and often overstrung, but figures not ill beside the average tragic style of the time. *The Mysterious Mother* was printed privately at Strawberry in 1768, and was afterwards published in 1781 with the postscript which has just been quoted.

The Castle of Otranto first appeared anonymously in 1764, purporting to be a translation 'by William Marshal, Gent., from the original Italian of Onuphrio Muralto.' This hardly amounted to a hoax; and next year, in a new edition, Walpole signed his name, and added a preface in solemn explanation of his purpose. His theories may or may not have been an afterthought; but there is no reason to doubt the statement in one of his letters that the tale was suggested by a dream. 'Romance,' so he tells us in the preface, ought at last to be united, or reunited, with 'nature'; and 'fancy' is to come into

her own again. 'The great resources of fancy have been dammed up by a strict adherence to common life.' Fancy must therefore range freely; but nature is, at the same time, still to be 'copied with success.' In modern language, the novel of manners is to be combined with the appeal of poetry and magic. But, in fact, there is no 'nature' at all in *The Castle of Otranto*, the personages are names and shadows, and the story is but vapour. What, then, of the 'romance'?

A single sentence will give some clue to the contribution made by Walpole to the English novel:

> gliding softly between the aisles, and guided by an imperfect gleam of moonshine that shone faintly through the illuminated windows, he stole towards the tomb of Alfonso, to which he was directed by indistinct whispers of the persons he sought.

No matter whether they came from the poets, or from pictures, or from actual old ruins, or from Strawberry itself—those aisles and storied windows, those half-heard sounds and that *lux maligna*, are real; they represent the writer's sensations; they were to penetrate our fiction. And here, too, is the first note of the 'tale of terror,'[1] *le roman noir*:

> an awful silence reigned throughout those subterranean regions, except now and then some blast of wind, that shook the doors she had passed, and which, grating on the rusty hinges, re-echoed through the long labyrinth of darkness.

These evocations, and not the huge helmet and the gigantic hands, were the novelty. Their historical influence on Mrs. Radcliffe and on Scott and his successors has often been traced. But for a quarter of a century they found no better conjurer than Walpole himself. Clara Reeve's *Old English Baron* (1777) is not alarming at all, but a pale affair; and Mrs. Radcliffe flourished after the Revolution. In Walpole's day, we find certain effects of the same kind in Smollett; and we may think of both novelists as unconsciously joining hands with the inventors of the *Highland Ode* and of the Ossianic phantoms on the heath.

Walpole's novel and his play show how his imagination was not to be satisfied with wit and news and scandal, or with connoisseurship. Throughout, we see this instinct to escape from his ordinary world into a freer one of fancy or reverie. Tired of eternally watching, and chronicling, and rallying, he would like to invent; all that is lacking is the divine gift, and well he knows it. The same revulsion is seen even in his little *Hiero-*

glyphic Tales.[1] They are trash ; or, to speak more amiably, are nonsense-stories ; Walpole calls them ' whimsical trifles written chiefly for private entertainment.' Even here there are flashes of his wit. The princess, to save her life, has to entertain the Sultan till he sleeps ; and she observes,

not but I believe I can tell as long stories as any princess in Asia. Nay, I can repeat *Leonidas* by heart ; and your emperor must be wakeful indeed if he can hold out against that.

That, perhaps, will be a sufficient notice, for the present survey, of Richard Glover's epic, *Leonidas*, which had come out in 1737, and which was several times reprinted afterwards.

Walpole also practised the more ordinary forms of light literature.[2] He wrote some pointed and gay articles in the *World* (Ch. IV.) ; and, in a brief, and equally gay, *Letter from Xo Ho*, which is conjectured to have given a hint to Goldsmith, he produced some Chinese reflections upon the political affairs of the year 1757. Also, like Chesterfield and others, he set down a series of ' detached thoughts ' ; and one of them, ' Posterity always degenerates till it becomes our ancestors,' has a very modern ring. Another paper, on the burning of the Alexandrian library, is in his most characteristic vein :

If I might escape being thought an absolute Goth, I should be of opinion, that the destruction of that library was rather a blessing than a detriment to the commonwealth of letters. What may we suppose those so many thousand volumes contained ? Were seven hundred thousand volumes all worth reading ? If they were, who would have leisure to read them ? If they were not, at least as many as were good for nothing have happily met with a proper fate. . . . Not to mention how enormously this library would have procreated other libraries ! What translations, commentaries, explanations, scholias, various readings, paraphrases—nay, what controversies would have been engendered by almost every volume in this capacious repository !

XIV

Walpole had the aims rather than the attainments of the scholar, and is not accepted as an authority on any of the more solid subjects that he undertook. The *Royal and Noble Authors* is a kind of scrap-book, full of notes that are sometimes flashy and sometimes hit the mark. He can see nothing in the verse of Rochester ; and he remarks, ' When Satyrs were brought to court, no wonder the Graces would not trust themselves there.' He has equally little to say for Fulke Greville. But his account

of the four 'characters' of the Duke of Buckingham—save for the undeserved compliment to Pope's *history*—is in his best style :

> The portrait of this Duke has been drawn by four masterly hands : Burnet has hewn it out with his rough chisel ; Count Hamilton touched it with that slight delicacy, that finishes while it seems but to sketch ; Dryden catched the living likeness ; Pope completed the historical resemblance. . . . Zimri is an admirable portrait ; but Bayes an original creation. Dryden satirised Buckingham ; but Villiers made Dryden satirise himself.

The *Anecdotes of Painting in England*, with the *Catalogue of Engravers*, are the fruit of greater labour, and have been several times reprinted. The work is a digest, and also an enlargement, of the mass of rude notes left by George Vertue the engraver. Walpole's own knowledge was considerable, if of an amateurish kind. Long before, he had studied the pictures at Houghton, his father's seat, and catalogued them as *Aedes Walpolianae*. The *Anecdotes* long remained in acceptance, in default of a scientific history of the subject. The *Historic Doubts* are written with edge and smartness, but were assailed by the learned in Walpole's own day, and failed to whitewash over the main charge against Richard the Third.

He also left more than one *apologia* for his own actions. He defended, not without dignity, his acceptance of various posts, which were practically sinecures, bestowed by his father. He described the part that he played in the quarrel between Hume and Rousseau, and the imaginary letter that he wrote to Rousseau from Frederick the Great. The style of these works is plain and candid ; but in his story of his dealings with Chatterton (Ch. xv.), Walpole, though little to blame, is embarrassed, and inclined to multiply words.

The various memoirs of the second and third Georges, though they must be read with all caution, and often become mere party chronicles, are precious to the historian, and abound in quips and stories. Together they extend from 1750 to 1783. Walpole's affection and esteem for his father, and his bias against his father's foes, must be remembered throughout. The 'characters' of Carteret and of Sir Robert are composed in this spirit, and are elaborately burnished in diction. Like the portraits in the same style by Hervey and Chesterfield, they are nearly the last in the old set form, and are sometimes marred by classical affectation, as if the writer were trying to be an English Tacitus or Sallust. And there is a good deal of that whimsical, slightly tiresome grimace of language, the verbal shrug or flicker of the fingers,

that is native to the man. As in Walpole's other writings, there is a sprinkling of gallicisms.[1] He is happiest when he drops into anecdote ; and few legends are better told than that of the large bird, ' I forget of what sort,' that flew in at the window of the Duchess of Kendal, and was received by her as the spirit of George the First. In one version it was a raven, in another a ' Cornish daw.' These memoirs supplement the *Letters*, and turn swiftly towards us many facets of the Georgian world. We hear of Medmenham, of the *Dilettanti*,[2] of Lady Sarah Lennox, and Catherine of Russia ; of the Cock Lane Ghost, and of William Pitt disabled, and carried into the House of Commons. All is variety, without disorder.

In 1788 Walpole put together for the Misses Berry some *Reminiscences* of long-past years. They include the notes he had taken down, in 1759-1766, from the lips of Lady Suffolk, then his neighbour at Twickenham. The stories go back far, and had doubtless been edited by Time. We are again in the court of Caroline and in the circle of Pope and Gay. We learn how these wits idly supposed that Esther Johnson was the sister of Swift ; and, more truthfully, how Opposition writers played their cards ill by paying court to Lady Suffolk, who was thought to control the king, and not to Caroline, who really did so. But no stray passages can give an idea of Walpole's innumerable scintillations. As well hang up in a cabinet half a dozen of those ' million little lamps ' of various colours that he watched at Vauxhall.

Of these, his rhymes[3] are not the dimmest, though they are ' little lamps ' indeed. His skits and invectives, against Pulteney and others, are seldom exhilarating. But his fables, like *The Magpie*, are often agreeably turned. He is best in compliment, and his happiest praises are those in which he shows an unexpected vein of lyrical fancy, recalling even Drayton's *Nymphidia*. Such are the lines granting to Lady Temple a patent to be poetess-laureate of the king of fairies :

> A chaplet of immortal bays
> Shall crown her brows, and guard her lays ;
> Of nectar-sack, an acorn-cup
> Be at her board each year filled up . . .

The Entail has the same delicacy of image, and is a half-gay, half-mournful prophecy of the fate of Strawberry, one day to be broken up. Horace is the butterfly, settled ' on the rich bosom of a rose,' who calls in the caterpillar, the ' subtle, slow conveyancer,' to ensure the entail ; but a ' wanton boy ' crushes the

fly in his hand. *The Parish Register of Twickenham* recites in Hudibrastic lines the notables of the place from 'polished Essex' to 'Fanny, ever-blooming fair,' Lady Fanny Shirley; and it contains the tribute of the exquisite Walpole to Fielding:

> Droll Nature stamped each lucky hit
> With inimaginable wit.

The lines 'An estate and an earldom at seventy-four!' are Walpole's best epigram on himself. And in his tributes to his pets, his dog Rosette and his bullfinch, we are almost in sight of Cowper; who, however, would have taken better care of his rhymes, and would have avoided this gentle profanity:

> But when the last shrill flageolet shall sound,
> And raise all dickybirds from holy ground,
> This little corpse again its wings shall plume,
> And sing eternally the self-same tune.

XV

The scene, hitherto, has been laid in Vanity Fair, or upon the political stage; the performers have been persons of some condition, and most of them are men. In the next chapter will be noted some of the women who move in the same world or upon its fringe. But all these form a caste and hardly reflect the average English temper; and, as a corrective, some voices should be heard from the professional or humbler ranks. Such lives are, naturally, best mirrored in the novel; and there is also Boswell, most of whose characters come from the higher middle class. But they usually have some tinge of letters; and Boswell himself is an artist. We want something more naïf and unstudied. The journals and memoirs that are written without art and often never meant for publication are often, we must admit, on the very outside edge of literature. Yet they show how our ancestors felt and spoke when they were off their guard and were not seeking to be authors; and how, again and again, they hit upon *le mot juste*. I shall, then, give them more room than is warranted by what is called their importance. They are chosen out of a crowd. They include soldiers of fortune, obscure clergy and tradesmen, private travellers and public explorers. Some of their stories have always been known; some were printed long ago and forgotten; some have been lately unearthed.

Many diaries[1] have been recovered and printed, which, unlike the memoirs, were not written for posterity and show little craft

with the pen. But often the entries are literature unawares ; they have the sharp savour of life, and they introduce us to social strata that were not touched by the novelists at all. They tell us what the unpretending classes liked to read, as well as what they ate and drank, and how they courted, and what life was like in a dull village or rectory. For example, Thomas Turner,[1] a flourishing general shopkeeper at East Hoathly in Sussex, provides a complete picture of himself. In his journal (1754-1765) we hear of his diet, and of his self-control in the matter of liquids ; he

> will never drink more than four glasses of strong beer : one to toast the King's health, the second to the Royal Family, the third to all friends, and the fourth to the pleasure of the company. If there is either wine or punch, never upon any terms or persuasion to drink more than eight glasses, each glass to hold no more than half a quarter of a pint.

But at times he oversteps a little : ' I cannot say I came home sober, but I was far from being bad company.' Or there is a revel in his house ; the tipsy ' boys ' drag him from his bed, with much offence to his modesty, dress him in his wife's petticoats, and force him to dance barefoot. He has differences with his first wife ; but after a while they go to church, take the sacrament together, and resolve, not very successfully, to live in peace. Mrs. Turner dies, and after a while Turner wishes to remarry ; and the portrait of his new choice, Molly Hicks, is to be treasured for its cool sense. I venture to quote at length a passage, in which the ' age of reason ' is not seen at its worst :

> First, I think marriage is a state agreeable to nature, reason, and religion. I think it the duty of every Christian to serve God and perform his religious services in the most calm, serene, and composed manner ; which, if it can be performed more so in the married state than in the single, it must then be an indispensable duty. As to my choice, I have only this to say : the girl, I believe, as far as I can discover, is a very industrious sober woman, and seemingly endued with prudence, and good nature, with a serious and sedate turn of mind. She comes of reputable parents, and may perhaps, one time or other, have some fortune. As to her person, I know it 's plain (so is my own), but she is cleanly in her person and dress, which I will say is something more than at first sight it may appear to be, towards happiness. She is, I think, a well-made woman. As to her education, I know it is not liberal ; but she has good sense, and a desire to improve her mind, and has always behaved to me with the strictest honour and good manners—her behaviour being far from the affected formality of the prude, on the one hand ; and, on

the other, of that foolish fondness too often found in the more light part of the sex. For myself, I have nothing else in view but to live in a more sober and regular manner, to perform my duty to God and man in a more suitable and religious manner, and, with the grace of the Supreme Being, to live happy in a sincere union with the partner of my bosom.

Turner, however, was not without sentiment. He was stirred by *Clarissa*; he was one of the great Richardsonian middle-class public. The book, he pronounces, is 'a very well-wrote thing,' and he enjoys the sorrowful ending: 'Oh, may the Supreme Being give me grace to end my life in such a manner as my exit may in some measure be like that divine creature's!' He reads *Peregrine Pickle*, and is found, as late as 1755, greatly enjoying the *Tatler*. He also studies Milton, *Othello*, and Smart's poems on the *Eternity* and *Immensity* of the Deity.

About the same date we have a glimpse of another library, that of Walter Gale,[1] a somewhat turbulent schoolmaster at Mayfield, near Hastings; he was removed for neglect of duty. Gale, in 1751, buys the four volumes of *Pamela* for four-and-sixpence. He bespeaks the poems of Stephen Duck; he reads the three volumes of *Philander and Silvia*, as well as somebody's *Caution to Swearers*; also *A Nobleman's Love-Letters to his Sister*, in three volumes, which Gale lends to a Mr. Rogers. He is also a thirsty man, who can drink (as the modern jest runs) 'any *given* quantity'; and when he is treated to a 'pint of mild' he makes a note of it. Another diary (1717-22), that of the Rev. John Thomlinson,[2] of Glenfield in Leicestershire, describes the seamy sides of village life in lay and cheerful tones, and is full of clerical gossip and after-dinner stories. Thomlinson alludes to the story told in the ballad of *Edwin and Emma*; and his prose, in spite of the grammar, is no worse than Mallet's rhymes:

> A man at Bows died for love, his parents would not let him marry one he loved, and who loved him so well that when the passing bell went for him, she fell down and swooned away, and lived but till next morning—her heart broke at hearing it, they were buried together.

Thomlinson is a small, dapper, unashamed soul, absorbed in his own feuds and ambitions, and little enough concerned with religion. Such records may give a truer picture of the minor clergy than do the Trullibers and Supples of the great artists.

The *Spiritual Diary and Soliloquies* (1776) of John Rutty, a Quaker physician who practised in Dublin, is the record not of a secular-minded parson but of a morbidly devout layman.

Johnson read the work with interest and amusement. Rutty reproaches himself in quaint and minute terms for some five distinct sins, or excesses. The first four are eating, drinking, smoking, and anger. 'Feasted a little swinishly,' or 'beyond the holy bounds'; 'Lord, give me fear in drinking!'; 'The Lord hath delivered me as a bird from the snare of compotators.' These are characteristic entries; and so is the complaint of a 'hypochondriac obnubilation,' cured by fasting on tea and cake. Rutty attends endless Quaker meetings, sometimes 'luminous,' sometimes 'dark and uncomfortable,' and mostly silent. He detests slavery; he talks with Wesley; he reads, with pleasure, 'Messrs. du Port-Royal.' His fifth sin, 'an inordinate pursuit of natural knowledge,' contends with his love for the 'noble' science of botany. Through all this there pierces a genuine and passionate piety, as he grows old and marks in himself the signs of *marasmus senilis* and of hemiplegia; and he cries: 'sixty-nine and ½ years are now past; soul, awake, and trim thy lamp!' It is the kind of language that Horace Walpole, had he lived to eight hundred instead of to eighty years, would not have understood.

XVI

One of the fullest and most simple-souled of these diaries was left by the Rev. James Woodforde [1] (1740-1803), who held country livings first in Somerset and then in Norfolk, and who was at one time sub-warden of New College. No more even existence could well be imagined; and none brings us closer to the parochial and collegiate life of the day. Woodforde's mind is of the gentlest, and indeed of the smallest, order; not exactly foolish, he has hardly a general idea; he never writes a literary sentence; and yet, or rather for that reason, he tells us much that we want to hear. He is an 'original authority' upon the eating and drinking of his class. It was a carnivorous age. Many columns, in the modern indexes to his diary, are devoted to foods and beverages. Dinner he treats, like Dr. Johnson, 'very studiously and very carefully.' Innocent academic bets are recorded:

> Dyer laid Williams 2s. 6d. that he drank [*sic*] 3 pints of wine in 3 hours, and that he wrote 5 verses out of the Bible right; but he lost.

When Woodforde takes his B.A., his glass door is broken open by merrymakers, and he is pulled out of bed. He 'disputes' for his B.D. in the regular fashion; there is a 'respondent,'

himself, and an 'opponent,' and he comes through quite well. One of his diversions when at Oxford was to go to see a man hanged; and he describes how Jack Ketch kissed George Strop, the wife-murderer, twice, in the presence of six thousand people.

But most of Woodforde's diary was kept in the country. He tells us, or rather tells himself, of his troubles with his maids and their swains, and of the woman who did open penance in church for misconduct. Once he asks a young lady 'not to make use of my seat in the chancel any more, as some reflections had been thrown on me for giving her leave'; but, in order 'to make it general' and not to attract notice, he puts the same request to a Mr. Kerr, who quite understands the position. He tells us a characteristic dream: two corpses are being carried through the churchyard, and yet there is 'a most elegant dinner served up in the chancel.' His piety is genuine and naïf; he sees, for the first time, a peacock spread its tail, and exclaims on the wonders of creation. One Sunday, his razor breaks in his hand; and he writes,

> May it always be a warning to me not to shave on the Lord's Day, or do any other work to profane it *pro futuro*.

He has a large faculty of admiration; and of a 'remarkably large pig, which even exceeded our idea of him,' weighing fifty stone, he speaks with the zest of Parson Trulliber. But no one could be less like a Trulliber; Woodforde did his work regularly and dutifully, if without 'zeal'; and we can safely multiply his harmless record a hundred times, in order to soften the pictures left by the novelists, and also by some historians, of the eighteenth-century parson. High politics, and even church affairs, seem to pass over Woodforde's head like the clouds; but once, in 1783, we hear the cry of a Tory over the coalition of Fox and North: 'Oh North! how low art thou fallen!'

Of all these homely histories none is queerer than the *Memoirs* (1791) of James Lackington [1] (1746-1815); the illiterate son of a drunken shoemaker; the escaped Methodist; and, latterly, the prosperous bookseller who could boast that he disposed of 'one hundred thousand volumes annually.' Lackington started life as a pieman and vendor of prophetic almanacs. It was long before he could read, and longer still before he could write. But he had a tenacious verbal memory, and easily overtook his arrears of education. His pages are variegated with poetical quotations; many of them are drawn from *Hudibras* and are in the nature of jeers against 'enthusiasm' and all the gifts of the spirit. Methodism, in one way or another, determined the

course of Lackington's experience. In youth, from sixteen to twenty-one, he was a passionate devotee, if not without carnal backslidings. Once he jumped from a second-story window, trusting in the text which promises the care of the angels. He describes the habits of the sect in detail, and his own gradual mental revolt. Then, for a while, he relapses *into* the fold ; and at last comes out of it for good. The *Memoirs* are thus a hostile document written by a ' revert.' Lackington retained a great respect for John Wesley, and grants that many of the persuasion are ' sincere, honest, friendly people.' But at last he joined fiercely in the chorus against the Methodist ' superstition.' Also he relates with gusto all the scandals that he can rake up against the brethren and the ' holy sisters.' In a later and paler work (*Confessions*, 1804) he repents of his bold stories, but still rejoices in his freedom.

Lackington had an inborn incorrigible passion for books. Once he spent his last half-crown upon a copy of *Night Thoughts* instead of on the dinner, and supped, along with his wife, upon its sombre ruminations. It is strange to hear of the literature that turned the current of such a mind. He had never seen or read a play, until the spectacle of *As You Like It* awakened emotions unknown before. And, of all volumes, it was Amory's *John Buncle* that helped him to shake off the fetters of ' enthusiasm.' Also he found some translations from the ancient philosophers ; and, for a time, he liked to regard himself as a moderate Epicurean ; he had at last learned that there are some pleasures which are innocent and permitted. Lackington, for all his crudities, was by no means wanting in hard sense ; and had shown, even whilst a convert, signs of being *anima naturaliter rationalis*. He has many stories of spirits that move about beds and furniture, but has always a prosaic explanation. He tells how a certain man, upon being challenged, successfully undertook to ' pray ' a certain other man ' to death in two months time.' But, says Lackington, anticipating the theory of ' suggestion,' the reason was that ' the ridiculous talk of the fellow actually affected the landlord's mind.' He was from the first an excellent business man ; and in 1774, with a capital of five pounds and a temporary partner, he set up his bookshop in Finsbury Square, on a basis of cash payments. In spite of ridicule, the venture triumphed, and the place became one of the sights of the town and a resort, as he tells us, for every type of humanity. Lackington has much of interest to say about his trade. In the last quarter of the century readers multiplied prodigiously, and the country folk began to take books home to

their firesides. The conclusion is his epitaph, composed by himself in secular and commercial terms. He is dead,

> Or out of print, as you would say,
> To be revised some future day;
> Free from errata, with addition,
> A new and a complete edition.

XVII

All these writers were home birds; and it is time to notice a few of the private travellers, before reaching the professional seamen and explorers. No novelist of the time moves on so wide a stage as William Hickey [1] (1749-?1830), the son of the Joseph Hickey so genially described in *Retaliation*. He became, after various misfires, an attorney; he voyaged to China, Portugal, Jamaica, and the Cape; but most of his life was spent in India, where he practised in the Supreme Court of Bengal and held public offices; often coming home and suffering from terrific storms and drunken skippers. He worked hard, but was continually thrown back by a passion for wine, women, and gambling. 'I never could depend upon myself,' he says, 'when embarked on convivial society.' He was a full-blooded and none too delicate adventurer, but neither ungenerous nor ill-conditioned. In his pages, which may be said to be stained deep with claret, the world of the bucks and the bloods, and also the half-world, lives before us. There are the makings of tragedy in the episode of his Charlotte, whom he rescued from a snarling protector, who insisted, though mortally ill, on accompanying him abroad, and whom he successfully passed off as his wife. Swindles, orgies, elopements, irregular establishments, move over the screen; and also the profiles of Wellesley and Cornwallis. The background, in the East, is war and disturbance: the Mahratta campaign, and the storming of Seringapatam. In contrast, we hear of 'the Honourable Miss Rose Aylmer, a very charming and lovely girl of about seventeen years of age,' who died in India in 1800. Some years before, as we know, Walter Savage Landor had made her acquaintance; and his memorial lines to her were printed in 1806.

Hickey chronicles a thousand matters, and has an eye for pageant and colour, with little sense of perspective. He relates large events and small with equal eagerness, and with legal precision. Some things in the memoirs remind us of Horace

Walpole. We hear, for instance, how Earl Ferrers was hanged for killing his steward :

> His Lordship was conveyed to Tyburn in his own landau, dressed in a superb suit of white and silver, being the clothes in which he was married ; his reason for wearing which was that they had been his first step towards ruin, and should attend his exit.

Hickey forgathered with Richard Burke, and also with William, of whom he has little good to say ; but there are notices, much to be treasured, of ' my respected friend, Mr. Edmund Burke.' He is heard rebuking, in a committee, a sulky prevaricating Nabob ; and Hickey gives us the text of a noble and characteristic letter written by Burke on behalf of a total stranger, recently convicted on flimsy evidence of an offence which at that time was capital. But the most vivid figure is one Tom Pott, an impudent wag and free liver, who is electrical whenever he appears. Emily, Pott's impetuous companion, is equally well presented. Her lover had the true nabob's taste for the grandiose ; and, when she died,

> Pott caused a magnificent mausoleum to be constructed over the grave by Mr. Tiretta, the Italian architect, *alias* Nosey Jargon, of whom I have already spoken, at an expense of near £3000, and not content with paying this compliment to her remains, he employed the same Tiretta to build the column I before mentioned, amongst herds of tigers at Culpee, because off that wild jungly place she breathed her last, which column cost him another £1000.

The sentence reveals Hickey as well as Pott, and we can hear him talking in his breathless way.

It is something to see the world through the eyes of an efficient Scot who was body-servant to some thirty gentlemen in turn and who accompanied his employers to three continents. The *Travels* of John Macdonald,[1] published in 1790, extend from 1745 to 1779. John expresses himself curtly and well, without any flourishes, and sets down what is before his eyes. He knows his place, but he has not a menial mind. He often speaks up to his master, and gives or receives ' warning ' with proper dignity. His upbringing was rough. At the age of four he trudged with his elder brothers and a presiding sister (aged fourteen) from Inverness to Edinburgh ; and there he begged in the streets. While still very young he commenced postilion and won approval for his conduct of the horses. Later on he was flogged by a coachman, who ' thought I did not give all the vails I got when I gave gentlemen their horses ' : and,

> as my troubles drove me to be religious, and to read the Bible,

the coachman damned me, and said, I disturbed the horses by praying.

Macdonald's religion, however, became elastic; in Spain he 'found it was best' to conform to the cult of the country; but once he was lured into playing cards on Sunday, and was much vexed. He was, unfortunately, very weak with women, far more so than Tom Jones; and he tells us things in plain words that Tom would never have told at all. At last he settled; married a faithful Malilia, whom he had left behind in Toledo and who had presented him with a son; and is last heard of employed in that city, in a hotel, to his 'satisfaction.' 'I said to myself, "The Macdonalds grow in Spain."' Meantime he had wandered over Britain and the Low Countries; he had gone to the island of Johanna, off Africa; and he had spent much time in India as the servant of Colonel Alexander Dow, who translated the *History of Hindostan*. Macdonald set down many vivid notes on the habits of the 'Gentoos' and of the 'Persians,' or Parsees, and on the lives, adventures, revels, and disputes of eminent persons. He is glad to be known as 'Handsome Macdonald,' and is peculiarly proud of his skill in ordering a banquet, in hairdressing, and in putting his masters to bed when they come home. Blessed with a good, rather engaging conceit of himself, he sometimes writes in a way that his betters might envy. His style has a certain finality. He thus records an early affair with a young lady:

> Near the end of April we left Edinburgh for Bargeny, and I took leave of Miss Cochran. I wrote her a letter, and she answered it; but absence is a great enemy to love: Ross, the waiter, got her with child and married her; so I lost her, and she lost herself. Ross was a good waiter but otherwise a bad character. When Mr. and Mrs. Boyd found they were married, they were both turned away. She bore a boy that was blind, and she herself broke her heart and died; so there was an end of one of the finest girls in Edinburgh.

It was John Macdonald who saw Sterne die, 'at the silk-bag shop in Old Bond Street,' and who reported the event to his master, Mr. John Crauford of Errol, at his dinner-party. The guests included the Earl of March, Garrick, and Hume; and 'the gentlemen were all very sorry, and lamented him very much.'

The *Journal* of another voyager opens at the end of this period: it is that of Samuel Kelly,[1] who served first in the Falmouth packets and then in the transport service, and who finally, in the employ of a Liverpool merchant, rose to be a shipmaster. His *Journal* has been lately rescued and published.

Kelly, in his travels to Jamaica, America, and elsewhere, saw and suffered many things, ended prosperously, and posted up his record in a thankful, not to say complacent, spirit :

> At fifteen years of age I earned my livelihood, and from that period never received five shillings as a gift from any relative, nor ever sailed from a port, to the best of my knowledge, one shilling in debt.

He saw a negro woman whipped in the West Indies ; he saw the dead floating after the wreck of the *Royal George* ; in Spain, he found that some prints illustrative of *Tom Jones*, and ' hanging in a room,' were ordered to be moved by the Inquisition ; and he had occasion to deplore the cowardice of a British commander who surrendered without need to an American warship. His early experiences were wretched ; once he was so hungry,

> that, to get a fresh bit, I have plundered a poor parrot of a bone of a fowl which the steward had given him, and chewed it up sweetly.

On the Falmouth service, he says, ' the effect of original sin was to be seen in its horrid perfection ' ; and Kelly, throughout, plumes himself on his good principles, on his just and handsome dealings with his crews, and on his providential fortune in never having been ' wrecked or stranded.' At some date which he does not record, he found religion ; and, somewhat conventionally considering all the facts, he states that his ' days have been few and evil.' Once he excuses himself for having seen no harm in the dance ; for he was then, he explains, ' in my natural state, and an enemy to God.' All this is chronicled in an even, rather phlegmatic style, and with much attention to detail. Kelly's temperature rises a little when he is shocked : when, for example, he finds a dubious lady lying at ease in the cabin of a British captain. Still, he takes the world as it comes. He tells the adventures of a mysterious ' Mr. W-rr-l,' a wild, rakish fellow of many intrigues ; but discovers him to be a student of Italian, and sits to listen while he reads out portions of Metastasio. This Mr. W-rr-l, it seems, reformed and became a successful physician overseas. Kelly sets down other curious observations, as might be expected of one who had ' sailed more than one hundred thousand miles on the Atlantic Ocean.'

XVIII

Most of these were irresponsible, unofficial wanderers ; and, as will appear in the following chapters, many an author, Fielding and Smollett, Goldsmith and Johnson and the Wesleys

and Horace Walpole, must be added to the roll. There are the scholars,[1] James Stuart ('Athenian' Stuart) and Richard Chandler, who founded in Britain the study of Hellenic art and antiquities, exploring Greece, the Ægean, and Asia Minor, and gave so powerful an impulse to 'classical' architecture at home; but they belong rather to the history of learning. There is also the array of voyagers and explorers,[2] for whom the eighteenth century is almost as noteworthy as the sixteenth, and a few of whom may be referred to here. Some went on service or as privateers,[3] against an enemy; some were sent as discoverers; and all, at some time or other, had to fight. The most illustrious group was that of the circumnavigators, from Anson to Cook, who fill the scene during the second and third quarters of the century. As in Hakluyt's collection, the greater men are not always the more skilled or lively writers; intent on business, on adding to knowledge, and on guiding others, they fill their pages with technical observations and hard facts. But suddenly they are surprised into vivid narrative: the occasion may be a tempest, a brush with 'Indians,' a new island, an engagement, or a mutiny. These sailors are seldom literary or rhetorical; usually they are as plain-spoken as Ohthere or Wulfstan.

The voyage round the world of Commodore George Anson, afterwards Admiral Lord Anson, was chronicled, not by himself, but by his chaplain on the *Centurion*, Richard Walter;[4] and Walter, though precise, is somewhat heavy with his pen. His narrative was published in 1748. Anson was a silent, undemonstrative man. Only once, left on the island of Tinian, in the Ladrones (Marianas), when the *Centurion*, blown out to sea and thought to have perished, reappeared at last, did he show feeling:

> the commodore, on hearing this happy and unexpected news, threw down his axe with which he was then at work, and by his joy broke through, for the first time, the equable and unvaried character which he had hitherto preserved.

Walter's accounts of storm, scurvy, frostbite, and battle bring out the iron quality of the commodore, who was also ranging for treasure. His squadron, though grievously diminished, rounded Cape Horn, coasted Peru and Mexico, struck across to the Marianas and to China, took the 'Manilla galleon,' with 'near a million and a half of dollars,' and returned by the Cape of Good Hope. One of Anson's ships, the *Wager*, Captain Cheap, was wrecked off the west coast of Patagonia; and its story is told in the separate and classic *Narrative* of the Hon.

John Byron, then a midshipman. This 'Foulweather Jack,' the poet's grandfather, is an admirable describer; the scenes of misery, cruelty, and endurance live before us. Storm and cold, hunger and disease, beset and thinned the company. They became the prey in succession of the elements, of the Indians, and of the Spaniards. A few pushed through and reached home. Byron's plain story gains by its lack of emphasis and flurry. We have a clear imprint of the selfish Captain Cheap, with a large piece beside him of boiled seal's flesh, which he refused to a dying man; of the Indian women who succoured Byron, unknown to their husbands, and kept him alive, carefully covering him with their own blankets; and of the young lady of Chiloe who wished to be his wife. He was almost tempted to consent, not indeed by her charms, but by her promise of some too long needed shirts. 'However,' he gravely adds, 'I had the resolution to withstand it, and made the best excuses I could.' Byron was afterwards to rise high in the service, having, as his grandson tells us, 'no rest at sea.'

In 1764, Byron, now Commodore Byron, in command of the *Dolphin* and the *Tamar*, was despatched by royal command to explore more fully the southern hemisphere. He was thus the first member of a famous band of whom Cook was to be the greatest. He took partly the same course as Anson, reaching Magellan and Juan Fernandez, and then the Marianas, but not circling by Mexico. He found many new islands, and much of his *Accounts* of his two years' voyage is as good as his *Narrative*. He describes the gigantic Patagonians, between six and seven feet high, and 'bulky in proportion'; the sea-lion who with one bite 'almost tore in pieces' a 'very fine mastiff dog'; the Islands of Disappointment, a 'little paradise' full of cocoanuts, where the natives would not let them land, and

> also frequently brandished their long spears, and then threw themselves backward, and lay a few minutes motionless, as if they had been dead; this we understood as a menace that they would kill us if we ventured to go ashore.

A more copious and punctilious narrator than Byron, and not less attractive, is Captain Samuel Wallis, commander of the *Dolphin*, who did his round during the years 1766-1768, and in the Society Islands rediscovered Tahiti, which had been visited by De Quiros, the Portuguese, in 1607. He too saw and measured some giants; and he describes the diet and their missiles, and how they were amazed by guns and mirrors. After navigating and surveying Magellan, Wallis made for the 'delightful and

romantic ' Otaheite (the epithet is rare among these travellers), and called it ' King George the Third's Island,' taking possession ' in his majesty's name.' Here he stayed for some time ; and the usual scenes of parleying, skirmishing, and bartering with the natives are suddenly varied by the entry of ' a tall woman, who seemed to be about five-and-forty years of age, of a pleasing countenance and majestic deportment.' She was, in fact, the queen ; and she not only entertained and feasted the British, and brought her maidens to chafe the feet of the sick captain, but pressed him to stay and wept with passion when he went. He presented parting gifts ; ' she silently accepted of all, but took little notice of anything.' It was time to go, for the men were commercing with the ladies of the isle, and stealing the ship's nails for current coin ; but Wallis first carefully chronicled the ' life, manners, and arts ' of the inhabitants. Off Patagonia the *Dolphin* had lost sight for good and all of her companion the *Swallow*, Captain Philip Carteret, who has left an independent account of his voyage. The *Swallow* was slower and imperfectly provided, and Carteret thought that Wallis, his superior, was inconsiderate. His *Account* is the more literal of the two, but is often good reading. He took a track of his own, discovered many more islands, and at Macassar, in the Celebes, had some bitter negotiations with the Dutch authorities. Carteret seems to have been an honest and dogged man, with a pardonable sense of grievance, and well able to shoulder his way through natural or human obstacles.

XIX

In the journals of James Cook [1] (1728-1779) much is nautical, scientific, or purely descriptive, the work of a consummate master of his business at all points, who is somewhat scornful of ornamentation :

> the public must not expect from me the elegance of a fine writer, or the plausibility of a professed book-maker ; but will, I hope, consider me as a plain man, zealously exerting himself in the service of his country, and determined to give the best account he is able of his proceedings [1776].

Cook, accordingly, does not raise his voice, or abound in epithets, or show excitement ; yet, in the intervals between his log-making, lists of native words, and topographical notes, he is anything but dry. He differs from the other captains by his indefinable air of strength and detachment, and his skill in

letting facts speak for themselves. His method is that of the historian, narrative with pauses for description; and often Cook, even where he is not the first discoverer, is the fullest chronicler of a strange land. His policy was humane; and one passage, on his dealings with the Tahitians, is a good example of his temper and manner. He was for ever being robbed; but

> Except the detaining some of their canoes for a while, I never touched the least article of their property. Of the two extremes I always chose that which appeared the most equitable and mild. A trifling present to the chief always succeeded to my wish, and very often put things on a better footing than they had been before. . . . Had I observed a different conduct, I must have been a loser by it in the end; and all I could expect, after destroying some part of their property, would have been the empty honour of obliging them to make the first overture towards an accommodation. But who knows if this would have been the event? Three things made them our fast friends. Their own good-nature and benevolent disposition, gentle treatment on our part, and the dread of our firearms. By our ceasing to observe the second, the first would have worn out, of course; and the too frequent use of the latter would have excited a spirit of revenge, and perhaps have taught them that firearms were not such terrible things as they had imagined. They were very sensible of the superiority of their numbers; and no one knows what an enraged multitude might do.

This was on Cook's second voyage; and the last words recall the finale of the third, his murder at Hawaii. We should hardly guess from his level tones how often he carried his life in his hand; but, as he says of the icebergs in the Antarctic, 'these dangers were now become so familiar to us, that the apprehensions they caused were never of long duration.'

Those 'ice islands' tempt Cook into one of his rare tributes to the picturesque; he speaks of 'their very romantic appearance, greatly heightened by the foaming and dashing of the waves into the curious holes and caverns which are formed in many of them'; but he cares not less for the 'seasonable supplies of fresh water' which they afforded. The gigantic and mysterious statues on Easter Island draw from him no lively expression of wonder; he simply gives 'a particular account' of them. Towards the end of the second voyage, Cook remarks, with the same coolness, that he had gone a distance nearly 'three times the equatorial circumference of the earth,' adding that he supposes no ship had before sailed so far in the same space of time.

His achievements, and the literature to which they gave rise,

could not be described here. His first great circuit (1768-1771), as a lieutenant in the *Endeavour*, is usually known in the form presented by John Hawkesworth (1773); but this is Hawkesworth's amalgam, in which the scientific chronicle of Cook's companion Sir Joseph Banks is melted down indistinguishably. Cook's real journal, and that of Banks (which is also of high value, and most attractive), can now be read separately. One aim of this expedition was to watch the transit of Venus at Tahiti; but it is famous for Cook's survey of the coasts of Australia and New Zealand, and for his planting of the flag. In the second (1772-1775), as commander of the *Resolution*, attended by the *Adventure*, Captain Furneaux, Cook disposed for ever of the imaginary 'southern continent,' and found New Caledonia and Sandwich Land; and by overcoming the fatal pest of scurvy, added to his glory. Besides his journals (1777, 1784) of this voyage, and of his third almost up to the date of his death, there are the further accounts of Johann Reinhold Forster and his son, George Forster [1] (1777), naturalists on the second, and of Dr. Samwell, the surgeon, who narrates Cook's end. There is also the sequel by Captain King, who reports the same event in less detail; he gives an excellent description of Cook and his character, and of the voyage home. Captain Clerke, of the *Discovery*, took command of the *Resolution*, but died on the journey, and was succeeded by King. All these leave their witness in one form or another. Among the feats of Cook's last voyage were the re-discovery of the Sandwich Islands, and the journey up the west coast of America, to within sight of the 'Icy Cape' of Alaska. Cook proved that the ice barred the North-West passage, which it was part of his mission to inspect. In the North he came upon Russian settlers, who kept in order, partly as he thought by 'severities,' the 'peaceable, innocent' Oonalashkans. These people he minutely describes, and adds that in point of honesty 'they might serve as a pattern to the most civilised nation upon earth.' He adds characteristically that the best apology for the severities is that they 'produced the happiest consequences.' Cook's greatness is evident, not only in his doings and in the praises of those who served under him, but in his faithful and clear-eyed comment on men and things.

XX

One memoir falls into none of these classes. A pleasing record of the surface of society, literary, academic, and Scottish-clerical, is to be found in the *Autobiography* of the long-living

Alexander Carlyle [1] (1722-1805), for fifty-seven years minister of Inveresk. He was seventy-eight when he began to write his recollections, which come down to the year 1770. He is thought to have been assisted by diaries, but they have vanished. The book, no doubt, is the talk of an old man, who discourses without much economy on whatever he remembers. The Scottish window-tax bulks larger than the American War. Carlyle does not go too deep, or think too hard ; but his memory is keen, and his narrative can be rapid and humorous. He recalls, and somewhat confusedly describes, the Porteous riots ; he was a volunteer in Edinburgh in 1745 for the defence of the city ; was a student there, and formed his long friendships with Robertson and John Home ; went over to Glasgow, where he sat under Hutcheson ; visited London, where he met Smollett, passed a day with Garrick, and heard a speech of the elder Pitt ; was much mixed up, in an influential way, with Scottish ecclesiastical affairs—a Sahara over which we hurry somewhat speedily ; and lived to read, with decided approval, the *Lyrical Ballads*.

Carlyle's stray notes on men and women of letters are swooped upon by all the biographers. He remembered the little things in which, as Horace Walpole remarks, posterity is most interested. The Scots are naturally in the foreground. We hear how Robertson always wished to 'shine,' and how he 'was the greatest plagiary in conversation that ever I knew' of other men's ideas, dressing them up in 'rich language,' and monopolising the floor ; how the crusty Dr. Armstrong, author of *The Art of Preserving Health*, 'bore down' James Thomson, 'having got into his sarcastical vein by the wine he had drunk before Thomson joined us' ; how Robert Blair, of *The Grave*, was 'austere and void of urbanity,' while Hugh Blair, of the *Rhetoric*, was 'naïf' and 'timid' ; James Macpherson (in whom Carlyle believed, at least for a time) was 'proud and reserved,' but still 'sensible and shrewd.' The portrait of David Hume, with whom Carlyle, like others of the liberal-minded clergy, was on easy terms, is confirmed by many witnesses. Hume, he states, was 'a large jolly man' ; and 'for innocent mirth and agreeable raillery I never knew his match.' Carlyle frankly finds the *Wealth of Nations* tedious, but has a genial eye for the humours of the author. Adam Smith

> was the most absent man in company that I ever saw, moving his lips, and talking to himself, and smiling, in the midst of large companies. If you awaked him from his reverie and made him attend to the subject of conversation, he immediately began a harangue,

and never stopped till he told you all he knew about it, with the utmost philosophical ingenuity. He knew nothing of characters, and yet was ready to draw them on the slightest invitation. But when you checked him or doubted, he retracted with the utmost ease, and contradicted all he had been saying. . . . On political subjects his opinions were not very sound.

Like Dr. Johnson, Carlyle lived greatly for conversation, and judges his acquaintance by their gift for talk. He had a sharp eye for a pose. We have met literary dames who were not unlike his description of Mrs. Montagu, the defender of William Shakespeare :

the conversation was all preconceived, and resembled the rehearsal of a comedy more than the true unaffected dialogue which conveys the unaffected and unstudied sentiments of the heart. What a pity it was she could not help acting. . . . She must have had many allurements when she was young and beautiful.

Carlyle gives a cheerful sketch of Smollett, whom he is surprised to find so companionable ; and he himself, in turn, is amiably mentioned in *Humphry Clinker* by Mr. Bramble.

We do not hear much about the poets in the *Autobiography*, though Gray, like Thomson, flits over the scene ; but there is a note on Shenstone, whom Carlyle visited at the Leasowes :

a large heavy fat man, dressed in white clothes and silver lace, with his grey hairs tied behind and much powdered, which, added to his shyness and reserve, was not at first prepossessing. His reserve and melancholy (for I could not call it pride) abated as we rode along, and . . . he became good company.

Sir Walter Scott, describing 'Jupiter Carlyle'—so called 'from having sat more than once for the king of gods and men to Gavin Hamilton'—remarks that 'a shrewd clever old carle was he, no doubt, but no more a poet than his precentor.' But he rendered one service to poetry : he discovered the lost manuscript of Collins's *Highland Ode*, and got it into print (Ch. XIV.), not without his own additions. His own prose is loosely hung, but agreeably sprinkled with Scottish idioms. Carlyle has an interesting note upon his native language. Lord Mansfield once asked him, about the year 1770, why it was that when reading the histories of Hume or Robertson 'he did not think he was reading English ?', and Carlyle replied

that to every man bred in Scotland the English language was in some respects a foreign tongue, the precise value and force of whose

words and phrases he did not understand, and therefore was continually endeavouring to word his expressions by additional epithets or circumlocutions, which made his writings appear both stiff and redundant.

Forty years after Carlyle wrote, what with the easier intercourse of North and South, and the institution of the official reviews, this barrier between the two literary idioms had all but vanished, and some of the best English was written by the Scots.

CHAPTER III

MEMOIRS AND LETTERS: WOMEN

I

CAROLINE[1] of Ansbach (1683-1737), the queen of George Augustus, has been mentioned already; and during her life in England literature stood in a special connection with the crown. She was not, like Elizabeth, a woman of letters or a symbol of the national spirit; nor had she the keen taste of Charles the Second, who cared for comedy, for science, and even for sermons. Her English was imperfect, and her spelling of French was extraordinary even in that age. But Caroline has a place of her own among our princes, and in the eighteenth century she stands in clear relief. She was almost the only able educated woman in the crowd of royalties, courtiers, and paramours; and if she was a smatterer in philosophy, divinity, and poetry, she knew more about them than should be expected from a queen. She was also their protectress; and a gleam of light is cast over the Philistine palace by her goodwill and intelligence. The evidence is widely scattered and here can only be sketched. The sombre pages of Hervey reveal, what all the historians confirm, her political instinct and capacity, her tact in steering the king, and also her cynic humour. Hervey tells us less about her interest in ideas and her good offices to authors. She was remembered with some gratitude and more respect, and at her death elegies abounded, hung 'on Carolina's urn.' Smollett, in his summary of the reign, records in his downright style the impression that she left behind her despite all the sneers of the Opposition wits:

> While the queen lived, some countenance was given to learning. She conversed with Newton and corresponded with Leibniz. . . . The court was animated with a freedom of spirit and vivacity. . . . At her death that spirit began to languish, and a total stagnation of gaiety and good humour ensued; it was succeeded by a sudden calm, an ungracious reserve, and a still rotation of insipid forms.

When Caroline, as Princess of Wales, arrived in 1714, she had

for some time carried on an eager exchange of ideas with Leibniz, whose *Théodicée* had appeared four years earlier. A projected English version, to be dedicated to herself, fell through.

Nous panson fort serieusement a faire tradevuire votre deodicé mais nous cheron un bon traducteur.

The celebrated controversies of Leibniz with Newton, so long drawn out, were continued, in Newton's interest, by Samuel Clarke ; and at the instance, as it appears, of Caroline they took the form of a correspondence, published in 1717. But Leibniz had died in the year before, and the plan went no further. Caroline, in her singular French, had discussed the foundations of theology with the philosopher. She holds, for example, that God, having once formed the soul in his own image, is powerless to annihilate it any more than he can make ' what we hold in our hand ' greater than the hand itself. Afterwards there are stories of the royal amateur sitting as ' arbitrator ' over abstruse debates, in which Clarke, Hoadly, and Sherlock figured. Enemies hinted that the queen believed too little, and inclined towards the still fashionable deism. She told the Arian Whiston [1] that she had read Wollaston's *Religion of Nature* ' over three times.' Whiston himself she aided with a pension, which the king continued after her death. Once she insisted that he should tell her her faults. Whiston said that she ' did not behave with proper reverence at church ' ; and she replied that ' the king *would* talk to her.' The divine rejoined that ' a greater than kings was there, only to be regarded.' Caroline acknowledged this, and said, ' Pray tell me, what is my next?' ' When I hear your Majesty has amended of that fault, I will tell you of your next.' Caroline not only loved arguing, and hearing argue ; she had an eye for merit. She showed a deep regard for Samuel Clarke ; but she is most to be respected for her service to Butler and to Berkeley. It is known that she inquired of Archbishop Blackburne whether Mr. Butler was dead, and was told, ' No, Madam, but he is buried.' In her last days she requested that care should be taken of him ; he was then her Clerk of the Closet ; and in the next year Walpole gave him the see of Bristol. There is a doubtful story that Caroline read the *Analogy* at her breakfast. Walpole had been hostile to Berkeley, the friend of Pope and Swift, and had declared that he was a ' madman.' Still, through Caroline's influence, Berkeley had been made Bishop of Cloyne. The saintly Thomas Wilson, Bishop of Sodor and Man, she failed to tempt away by the

prospect of preferment; and he is reported to have replied, 'I will not leave my wife in her old age because she is poor.'

Caroline countenanced more than one of the arts, in which the house of Hanover has seldom taken more than a polite interest. She praised the *sentiman noble et digne* of *Cato*; she laughed at *Gulliver*, and while Princess of Wales kept happy relations with Swift. Like the king, she admired and favoured Handel; and from the first she had encouraged and attracted authors. She accepted the florid inscription of the translated *Henriade*, published in London in 1728; and Voltaire, in his own English, speaks of her 'not only as the protectress of all arts and sciences, but as the best judge of them.' She obtained leave for the banished Jacobite Carte to come home quietly. Her dealings with Savage have been told at length by Johnson: how, by the intercession of Lady Hertford, she was at last persuaded to procure his pardon, when he was condemned to death; how she gave him a pension, and expected praises in return; and how Savage, who in the hope of more had made himself her 'volunteer Laureate,' was indignant when she neglected his proposals and 'patronised Mr. Duck's with uncommon ardour.' This was Stephen Duck, the thresher-rhymer, whom Caroline appointed her librarian at Richmond, and whom Pope befriended. She suggested to Bentley that he should edit Milton, but we do not know what she thought of the result; and she sent fifty pounds to Elizabeth Foster, Milton's granddaughter. She found money for Elizabeth Elstob, the Anglo-Saxon scholar, who is said to have been the first woman to study the old language. It is true that she disappointed Gay, who had long played the courtier, and who declined in pique the office of gentleman-usher to the Princess Louisa, aged three. He swung over, with his set, to the Opposition; and soon after this came the *Beggar's Opera* and *Polly*.

As time went on, Caroline seems often to have done her good deeds by proxy. Her chief agent was Mrs. Clayton, afterwards Lady Sundon,[1] who received and forwarded many a petition for office, or interest, or funds. These letters can be read for a lesson in cynicism. Lady Sundon did her work loyally and shrewdly, but after the death of her mistress she sinks out of sight. Caroline, during her latter years, lost much of her hold on the literary class, as it rallied more and more to the Opposition. The rival court of Frederick[2] Prince of Wales, ever at feud with his parents, became the rallying-point of the malcontent Whigs and the young 'patriots.' Some of the leading

wits, Pope and Swift, formerly friendly to the queen, now shot their arrows against her. Chesterfield described her in a pointed *Character*. Dodington clung to Frederick so long as it paid him to cling. The band were held together by a common antipathy rather than by any policy; and they gambled in vain on the chance of Frederick outliving his father. That dubious and prosperous adventurer and rhymer, Robert Nugent,[1] afterwards Earl Nugent, in a birthday ode, prophesied the happy rule of the heir-apparent, who was in fact to die in 1751 :

> And when, beneath thy counselled reign,
> Britain shall plough the subject main . . .

Frederick is supposed to have inspired, or even written, that vapid little lampoon, *Histoire du Prince Titi* (1736), in which his parents, as 'Ginguet' and 'Tripasse,' are taunted with avarice. He had none of his mother's brains; but he too, in his way, patronised men of letters. He is also said to have left five hundred pounds to Glover, the author of that stillborn epic *Leonidas* (1737); and he received the dedication of the *Seasons* in its final form (1746).

II

The writers who profited by Queen Caroline's bounty were chiefly men; and most of the ladies now to be chronicled, who survive in their memoirs and correspondence, flourished after her time or outside her orbit. Lady Hertford and Lady Pomfret had been her maids of honour, but their exchange of letters begins after their retirement. Mrs. Delany was a contemporary, but moved in a different circle. The Duchess of Northumberland, Lady Sarah Lennox, and Lady Mary Coke belong rather to the next reign; and the professional authoresses, Mrs. Carter, Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu, Mrs. Chapone, and Miss Catherine Talbot, form another group apart, the first three of them just outliving the eighteenth century. But the whole record shows how the world of rank and fashion, as time went on, paid increasing respect to reputable women of letters. Mrs. Delany and Mrs. Montagu, in different ways, belong to both spheres; and the social position of Mrs. Carter has no parallel in the age of Pope, when most of the women writers, like Mrs. Manley and Mrs. Haywood, were outside the pale. But to this rule there is one great exception.

III

It is natural to begin with a salaam to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu [1] (1689-1762), who in her youth showed a translation from Epictetus to Bishop Burnet, and who, at the age of sixty-six, read *Sir Charles Grandison* and remarked of the writer that he had 'no idea of the manners of high life.' She links together two literary periods, and watched them with the quickest intelligence; but she cannot be said to speak for both. She judged the great novelists in the temper of the age in which she was formed, and also, in some measure, as a foreigner. When she quitted England in 1739, never to return until the very last, her life was cut in two. Her brilliant phase lay behind her: her strange, intrepidly stolen marriage with Edward Wortley, the steady-paced official; her friendship with Steele and the wits, and her life at court; her notable journey to Turkey with her husband the ambassador, and the classic letters from the East which were only published after her death. Here she could give her wit the rein; her starved feeling for beauty and colour and splendour was for once satisfied; and the real East is described, probably for the first time, from the vantage-ground of an English lady of quality. Then came the quarrel with Pope, with whom she had corresponded, and Pope's low revenge. But the society that she saw could not satisfy Lady Mary's sincere and irritable mind; and she found little solace within. She left Wortley: there seems to have been no violent rupture, but a simple parting of the ways. She wrote to him constantly and at length, in no unfriendly style. She adopted Italy for her home, and settled at Lovere, within reach of Brescia. There remained the pleasures of solitude, of observation, of reading, and of writing letters. The best of these are addressed to her daughter, Lady Bute, to whom she once exclaims with an unwonted glow of language:

> You have been the passion of my life; you need thank me for nothing; I gratify myself whenever I can oblige you [1757].

Her letters are her monument; her verses, such as the *Court Poems* (or *Town Eclogues*), some of which were printed in 1716, are rough and derivative. The manner and the measure of the *Bassette-Table* and its companions are Pope's, or rather Gay's, and it was suggested, and is likely enough, that the work was touched up by them while handed round in manuscript. There are only a few pleasant touches, like the picture, in *St. James's Coffee-House*, of the lady whose 'bright hair played careless

round her face.' But one poem, written before Lady Mary's departure, is no mere literary exercise, and prepares us for her greyer mood. She wonders when the 'dirty journey' of life will end, and whether the 'unbodied spirit' will fly to heaven, or sleep for ever, or will come back here,

> Acting once more on this detested stage
> Passions of youth, infirmities of age ?

and why should she stay on earth at all, 'and mourn in prison whilst I keep the key'? In her prose she is never quite so desperate; and in her familiar writing she stands near the best of the Augustan masters. It is the exact expression of a clear, disenchanted, and unshrinking mind; and her talk must have resembled it. It is not too loose in form, and not too studious. It has little imaginative colouring, no delicacy, and a great deal of edge and wit. Lady Mary's bitterness, though extreme, was honest, was a good deal justified by circumstance, and is expressed without rhetoric. Before she was thirty her temper had hardened; and she writes to her sister, Lady Mar, in terms that warn us to be careful in speaking about the age of 'complacency' and prosaic sense, when to one of its keenest observers it wore this aspect:

> All these things, and five hundred more, convince me (as I have the most profound veneration for the Author of Nature) that we are here in an actual state of punishment; I am satisfied I have been one of *the* condemned ever since I was born; and, in submission to the divine justice, I don't at all doubt but I deserved it in some pre-existent state. I will still hope that I am only in purgatory; and that after whining and grunting a certain number of years, I shall be translated to some more happy sphere, where virtue will be natural, and custom reasonable; that is, in short, where common sense will reign [1727].

Lady Mary's more settled view of life comes out plainest in her foreign letters. She has a streak of fatalism; it would be too much to say that she had caught it in the East; perhaps the belief of Epictetus remained in her mind, that we are shifted about by an overruling power, and that we can only strive to rule ourselves inwardly. But Lady Mary's view is less theological:

> 'Tis long since I have been of Prior's opinion, who, I think, somewhere compares us to cards, who are but played with, do not play. At least such has been my destiny from my youth upwards; and neither Dr. Clarke nor Lady Sundon could ever convince me that I was a free agent; for I have always been disposed of more by little

accidents, than either my own inclination or interest. I believe that affairs of the greatest importance are carried the same way [1740]. . . . The poor efforts of our utmost prudence and political schemes appear, I fancy, in the eyes of some superior beings, like the pecking of a young linnet to break a wire cage, or the climbing of a squirrel in a hoop [1755].

So she forms her code; and she is always trying, and with more effort than might be supposed, not to be a woman. But the hardness of the male is really beyond her, and at times she breaks down. Some of her letters to Wortley about that 'disagreeable subject,' 'our son,' are formidable. He was a young waster; she dissects him frigidly and bitterly, and time after time pours contempt upon the very thought of him. But at last she falters, and writes to Wortley about '*my* son':

I can no longer resist the desire I have to know what is become of my son. I have long suppressed it, from a belief that if there was anything of good to be told, you would not fail to give me the pleasure of hearing it. I find it now grows so much upon me, that whatever I am to know, I think it would be easier for me to support, than the anxiety I suffer from my doubts. I beg to be informed, and prepare myself for the worst, with all the philosophy I have.

Then she apologises to herself for caring; and surely the cult of reason never took a stranger twist than this:

All that reflection and experience can do is to mitigate, we can never extinguish, our passions. I call by that name every sentiment that is not founded upon reason, and *own I cannot justify to mine the concern I feel* for one who never gave me any view [*sic*] of satisfaction [May 24, 1751].

To her daughter she speaks yet more frankly. 'I do not know in my whole life having ever endeavoured to impose on you.' Lady Bute had 'many blessings,' including a good husband, 'agreeable, hopeful children,' and a handsome house and garden; and yet she was full of painful 'concern' amidst it all. Lady Mary sympathises:

A mother only knows a mother's fondness. Indeed, the pain so overbalances the pleasure, that I believe, if it could be thoroughly understood, there would be no mothers at all [July 22, 1754].

And her conclusion, which expresses her final creed, is that you should keep fast hold of 'the comforts you may enjoy in the present hour.' In the same tone, five years later, being now seventy, she tells Sir James Steuart that she sees

in general, all people earnestly seeking what they do not want, while they neglect the real blessings in their possession—I mean, the innocent gratification of their senses, which is all we can properly call our own.

And then, with an echo of Hamlet, she ends :

Adieu ! Live happy, and be not unmindful of your sincere distant friend, who will remember you in the tenderest manner while there is any such faculty as memory in the machine called . . .

So Lady Mary had a heart after all. But she was, first and foremost, an intellectual creature ; and her sardonic pictures of life, like her opinions upon books, show a veracity of vision which nothing could have bribed.

IV

She can tell a short and true story admirably ; and in Italy, the land of the *novella*, she found her opportunities. The 'small history, in which I had some share,' of the Signora Laura Bono, whom Lady Mary 'found prostrate on the ground, melting in tears, and her husband standing with a drawn stiletto in his hand,' is a perfect example of this gift ; and she records her diplomacy on the occasion with suitable relish. Her report on the titled 'amazons,' who in 1739 had kicked and pushed their way into the House of Lords, in order to hear the debate, and to disobey the rules, is of the same stamp. It is to be regretted that the amiable Mrs. Pendarves, afterwards Mrs. Delany, was one of this 'tribe of dames' ; but we have her different version of the incident. Lady Mary's pages on the institution of the *cicisbeo*, and her sallies against Popery, show other facets of her mind.

Lady Mary has little good to say of the elder Augustan writers to whom she had been so close. Pope, naturally, is best abused of all ; but she is without mercy for Swift and Bolingbroke. The former she compares to Caligula ; and the latter, most incorrectly, she judges to be 'far below Tillotson,' even in point of style :

All the writings I have ever seen of his appeared to me copied from the French eloquence. I mean a poor or trite thought dressed in pompous language.

Her tirade against the *Nut-Brown Maid* and the 'monstrous folly of its story in plain prose,' is notorious ; but she knew it

only through Prior's *Henry and Emma*, a composition which in her old age she could still say by heart:

> the virtuous virgin resolves to run away with him, to live among the banditti, and wait upon his trollop, if she had no other way of enjoying his company.

Yet in earlier days she had admired a Turkish love poem and sent a prose translation of it to Pope; adding, however, a rhymed one of her own, in which 'The nightingale now wanders in the vines' becomes, 'Now Philomel renews her tender strain.' But she is uneasy, not thinking that the 'style of English poetry' is 'proper to express such violence of passion, which is very seldom felt amongst us.' She does not see that the fault lies with the only 'style of poetry' that she can recognise.

Lady Mary is not thus hampered when she reads a novel. In her exile she devours fiction, good and bad, like Colman's Polly Honeycombe. She cannot go to bed till she has finished Coventry's *Pompey the Little*. She begs her daughter to send her all the trash that is printed, as it will 'serve to pass away the idle time.' It is singular that in *Peregrine Pickle* she admires the chief blemish of the book, the foisted-in *Memoirs of Lady Vane*, although she suspects the author to have touched them up; and that she supposes *Roderick Random* to be Fielding's. Mrs. Haywood's *Betsy Thoughtless* and *Jemmy and Jessamy* deservedly 'gave her some amusement.' In her youth she had pored on all the French romances; and her daughter, who inherited the taste, must have been one of their last admirers. But Lady Mary had surfeited in due course of the Astraeas and Cassandras; and her most pointed comments are on Richardson and on her kinsman Fielding. Her finding on *Sir Charles Grandison* is of the severest: she tears to pieces the characters, the heroics, the sentiment, and the 'manners.' Yet, she exclaims,

> I was such an old fool as to weep over *Clarissa Harlowe*, like any milkmaid of sixteen over the ballad of the *Lady's Fall*.

We soon come to expect in Lady Mary this mixture of natural sentiment, acquired hardness, and lucid self-description. Equally familiar is her opinion of Fielding. Living abroad, she could not check the legends about his behaviour, and laments the 'continued indiscretion (to give it the softest name) that has run through his life, and I am afraid still remains' (1755).

'Tom Jones and Mr. Booth are sorry scoundrels,' and set a bad example to the young. Lady Mary had never been lenient to the young; and such a return to the attitude of the censor is not uncommon in quick-minded old ladies who have seen the world. Also she deplores Fielding's habit of 'raking in the lowest sinks of vice and misery'—things for which she had a patrician dislike. But she recovers herself; she sits up all night to read him; she sees that he had a 'fund of true humour'; and, still better, that 'since I was born, no original has appeared, excepting Congreve and Fielding.' No man, she adds with a little envy and surprise, 'enjoyed life more than he did.' All these flashes of insight, and all her caprices (such as her aversion to Mme. de Sévigné, her great fellow-craftswoman), complete our view of Lady Mary, and assure us of her radical sincerity.

V

For entertainment of a milder kind may be commended the letters exchanged in the years 1738-1741 between Frances Countess of Hertford and Henrietta Countess of Pomfret.[1] Lady Pomfret figures in Walpole's gallery as the type of preciousness, vanity, and blundering pedantry; but he is malicious, and is hard upon this harmless lady, to whom Lady Mary could write with 'esteem and affection.' 'Precious' no doubt Lady Pomfret is; and she is capable of calling the sun the *absent brother* of the moon. Her letters, like those of her friend, open with studious bows and minuet-like gestures:

> Although I am not sufficiently vain to think that I merit half the kind things you say of me, yet I should be very ungrateful to doubt the kindness that produces them, and exceedingly cruel to myself were I to endeavour to disbelieve what affords me so much pleasure. . . . How charming is kindness from those we love—and love for such qualities as Lady Hertford possesses!

Her commonplaces positively exhale, as she might have said, an agreeable and tender fragrance:

> Indeed it is the time of fruits and harvest: May delights the eye, but August brings us nourishment; youth pursues happiness; but it is our ripe age that enjoys it. . . .

Lady Pomfret, attending her gouty lord, made the great tour through France, Italy, and Germany; and has left many flat recitals, in the days before Murray, of churches and galleries, and

more lively accounts of dresses and social festivals. She is not so interesting as Lady Hertford, who expects and receives from her friend, and with a stately air of reluctance swallows whole, many deferential compliments. Lady Hertford, when she chooses, can reply in kind:

> Your goodness in writing to me so frequently, dear madam, is a proof of your disinterested love of giving pleasure. . . . Your account of Ferrara, dear madam, is the melancholy picture of the instability of all human greatness. . . . Therefore let me entreat you, my dear Lady Pomfret, to bring me only the share of partiality with which you have allowed your heart to be biassed in favour of one, who, though in other respects unworthy of it, has the merit of being, with the sincerest friendship, your most obliged and devoted humble servant.

We cannot write like that now. Lady Hertford, who stayed in England, also had a gouty lord, afterwards Duke of Somerset, and tended him duly; she moved about between various country seats, and saw and chronicled a good deal of the world. She has more edge, and a cooler mind, than her travelled correspondent. Literature, the country, and now and then politics, figure in her letters. She had, as Johnson relates, protected Savage; she was the hostess of Thomson, and received the dedication of *Spring*, but is said to have been piqued by his indifference to her performances in the heroic couplet. She favoured Shenstone, and also the poet Duck. She did not think that La Rochefoucauld was the best reading for women, and she had a moderate aversion to the Methodists. Both these ladies share discreetly in the new liking for natural scenery. Lady Pomfret speaks warmly of the Apennines; Lady Hertford describes the gentler landscapes of Richkings and Marlborough. Nor is romance absent. The countesses exchange stories (from real life) of young people who either died, or who after all did not die, from disappointed affection. Lady Pomfret provides the best of these *novelle*. She tells of the child whose inheritance was contested by his brothers on the ground that he was 'not a Christian'; and why? because, when he was baptized, no holy water was at hand, and for the emergency was used rose-water. Growing up, he was separated from his love by means of forged letters informing each party that the other was dead. So he turned priest; but, on afterwards meeting the lady alive, unpriested himself speedily and married her. This tale was told to Lady Pomfret at Venice by Horace Walpole; but how the lawsuit had ended, he did not know.

VI

Better literature, because without any pretence, are the diaries of Elizabeth, Duchess of Northumberland [1] (1716-1776), with their delight in pomp and pageantry, in cost and splendour, in feasting and ceremonial; and, again, in strange cities and motley streets, in foreign dress and custom; and, not least, in the scenery of rivers and mountains. At Lyons, in 1772, she finds

> the prospect from my windows marvellously lovely. I looked immediately over gardens to the Saône and the mountain rising from it covered with a thousand pleasing objects: houses, churches, convents, ruins, fortifications, fields, trees, gardens, vineyards, etc., etc., the rock peeping out his hoary sides everywhere amongst them.

That recital, with its 'etc.,' is like something in Burton's *Anatomy*. And Vaucluse is

> the most lovely romantic village I ever saw, encompassed with gigantic rocks. The Sorgue issues a number of branches here, and yet is itself a prodigious river, coloured like aquamarine, rapidly rushing like a torrent, and in some places where it meets any obstruction throws up its liquid sparkles perpendicular like a fountain.

Such an outburst, which fifty years later would be nothing, shows the growth of the sense of beauty, in an unbookish mind, at a date soon after the death of Chatterton. In 1760, visiting Dunstanburgh Castle, the Duchess is impressed by 'something stupendous, magnificent in its appearance':

> the grandeur of which that day was greatly augmented by a stormy N.E. wind which made the waves (mountain high) clash foaming and soaring against its walls, and made a scene of glorious horror and terrible delight.

These are interludes; and her favourite spectacle is the life of courts and cities, which she observes in England, in Paris, and in Germany. Her journals extend, with many breaks, from 1759 to 1774. She witnessed the marriage of George the Third, and until 1770 was a Lady of the Bedchamber to Queen Charlotte. She describes at length the young king, and his table, and the morning ritual, and the birth of the Prince of Wales, and the little mask held on the birthday of Prince Edward, who was

> exhibited in the character of Bacchus with a close jacket, etc., of flesh-coloured satin, to represent his naked skin, with wine-leaves

and tendrils twining round him; and a chaplet of vine-leaves and clusters, finely interwove among his little white curling locks, shaded his plump ruddy cherub cheeks.

In Paris, she sees the Dauphin and the young Marie Antoinette; is entertained by Madame Du Barry, and portrays her at length; and watches the fireworks at Frascati. She passes to Bonn, and describes the gallantries at that court; 'a virtuous woman is here almost as rare a bird as a black swan.' But she does not dwell long upon scandals, merely relating them (in quite plain terms) as though in the course of conversation with herself. I have called the Duchess of Northumberland unbookish, on account of her unaffected style; but in fact she paid tribute to the muses; she liked books and writers; and she wrote little verses, in her eager amateur way, for the little rhymesters of Bath; being unwilling, we may think, to forgo at least one look into every booth in the Great Fair.

VII

The breathless and abundant journals of Lady Mary Coke[1] (1726-1811) present to us one of the strangest great ladies of the time. The youngest daughter of John Duke of Argyll, married at twenty-one to the impossible Edward Viscount Coke, son of the Earl of Leicester, and separated from him after two years, Lady Mary was left a widow in 1753. Her records begin about 1766, and have been printed up to the year 1775, in four thick volumes. A most caustic and witty, but not malignant, commentary is found in the memoir of the Argyll family written by Lady Louisa Stuart, who in her youth knew Lady Mary well, and who watched her, with absorbed amusement, as the female Quixote of the social comedy. She was so independent, so untouched by scandal and so charitable, and yet so completely self-engrossed and so naïvely absurd that (so Lady Louisa deplores) her very virtues became a byword. 'Nothing ever happened to her after the fashion of ordinary life'; like the Don, she saw men and women as they were not. The journals, which were unknown to Lady Louisa and were made for the eyes of Lady Strafford, the writer's sister, bear out this description, but leave us rather more in charity with Lady Mary. When we read the brilliant phrases of Sir Walter Scott's friend, we remember the old play-title, *Women Beware Women*. The journals begin in the midst of an affair, if such it can be called, with Edward Duke of York; who was much her junior, who

paid her more or less mock, though most respectful, attentions, and whom, so it was supposed, she hoped to marry ; and the matter became a jest :

> The Duke of York was standing near me. . . . His Majesty said, as he passed by them, ' Lady Mary looks in great beauty ' ; but though he certainly does me great honour . . . I could not find out why it was said at that time ; however, it was very gracious.

But soon the Duke died ; and the unhappy lady's delusion, her real chagrin, and her delighted pose of grief, are revealed as ruthlessly by her journal as they are by her chronicler. She takes it as an intended slight if any one should mention the event to her in ' indifferent ' tones, or indeed at all ; and also, according to Lady Louisa, if any allusion were made even to Westminster Abbey, where the Prince was buried. Lady Mary is then found at the Austrian court, and is received with honour and regard by Maria Theresa ; and this is the summer, the proud flowering-time, of her life. But alas, after a while she returns to Vienna, behaves undiplomatically, finds herself coldly received, and retreats under the permanent hallucination that the Empress is pursuing her, through hostile agents, wherever she goes. But should the Empress write to her, she will ' certainly forgive her.' We also learn again from Lady Louisa of her quarrelling over a trifle with Horace Walpole, an old friend ; and again, in a moment of unreason, with the Princess Emily or Amelia, after a long and intimate alliance. Lady Mary was undoubtedly touched with what is now called paranoia, or the persecution-mania. But she has a happier side. From the countless items jumbled together, without any sense of scale, in her journal, we can pick out traits of goodwill, of concern for matters outside herself, and of humour. She sends wine and money to a poor woman who has been ' taken in labour in the street ' ; she is good to her servants ; she is invited to nominate to a small post, and is ' very much pleased with being able to serve one that I believed to be an honest man.' Also it is she who tells, at second-hand, the story of Adam Smith putting bread and butter into the teapot. And there is the other story of the Cardinal to whom she lost money at ombre :

> When the clock struck eight, he said a prayer ; and at nine he ate a cold pheasant ; when he had counted his winnings he said, ' And I have not once cheated you ! ' ' Good God ! ' I answered, ' are you accustomed to cheat ? ' and in this manner ended my party with his Eminence :

who, no doubt, was jesting; but it was not in Lady Mary to see that. Little is heard in the journals of art, or thought, or letters, or great affairs, and Lady Mary is nothing of a writer; but her notes of the court, of travel, and of her family are, all unconsciously, a social document of price. Now and then she shows unexpected gusto. She visits the Château de Grignan, and is haunted by the genius of the spot:

My imagination is so totally employed about Mme. de Sévigné that I am persuaded by and by I shall think she appears to me; every noise I hear, I expect to see the door open.

VIII

The natural careless speech of a woman of rank, who is also a woman with a heart, and a beauty besides, is heard in the letters of Lady Sarah Lennox.[1] Born in 1745, she was daughter of the second Duke of Richmond; married Sir Charles Bunbury the *beau*; then was the mistress of Lord William Gordon; and lastly, after a while, married George Napier. Lady Sarah, when very young, had been pointedly admired by the new king, George the Third; but nothing came of that. Her one lapse was forgiven by Bunbury, and forgotten in her long and admirable after-life; she lived till 1826, the mother of many Napiers, including Sir William and Sir Charles. Her letters, at first squirrelly and girlish, and then, after her eclipse, graver and shrewder, yet still light of touch, are humane and friendly. Her intimate friend, Lady Susan O'Brien, daughter of Lord Ilchester, had lost caste by marrying a handsome Irish actor for love (how good-looking all these *dramatis personae* are!). Lady Sarah sends her letters full of counsel without patronage, and also of many confidences. In 1779, having now long parted from Gordon, and living with her daughter in retreat, she writes of

the wish I have long had to see Sir Charles [Bunbury] again. I hope my dear Ly Susan knows me enough to comprehend that I never could return all the goodness of Sir Charles to me by the least grain of dislike; I was *indifferent*, and that has always been the cause of my ingratitude, which never proceeded from anger or dislike; with this same indifference as to love, I have always had an interest in everything that concerned him, and I never felt satisfied not to have received his pardon.

She then tells how Sir Charles had called on her, had touched her by his friendly and 'ingenious' delicacy; how, when he had said, 'You know I 'm not apt to bear malice!' she had

gone into ' a fit of crying ' ; and how ' it is very true that every mark of his forgiveness is like a dagger to my heart.' A year before marrying Napier, she expresses a hope that ' I shall never be idiot enough to marry *avec toutes mes années et tous mes défauts.*' Lady Sarah has not exactly wit, and does not deal much in abstract ideas, but she is never dull; and she is on the right side, on Mr. Burke's side, in the matter of the American War ; and she is properly indignant at ' Mr. Burke's being thrown out at Bristol ' :

it is true merchant like, for they are so selfish they cannot bear his principles of freedom should extend to anybody but themselves, and his wishing Ireland had a free trade is his crime ; pray read his beautiful address to them on taking leave. . . .

IX

There is a cooler charm in the voluminous correspondence of Mrs. Mary Delany [1] (1700-1788) and her circle. This long-living lady was a Granville, the niece of Lord Lansdowne the wit and poet, Pope's ' Granville the polite.' In 1717 her uncle arranged for her, against her liking, a marriage with a morose and bibulous elderly gentleman, Mr. Pendarves ; who happily died, though not till seven years afterwards. Her second marriage (1743-1768) was with Dr. Patrick Delany, the intimate companion of Swift, and latterly Dean of Down. Mrs. Pendarves had been Swift's disciple and correspondent. He called himself her ' master,' and tutored her English, not with the best results. Her letters to him are somewhat strained ; her natural speech is unaffected. She had been pursued by many suitors, young and old, honest and otherwise ; and many of her adventures with them were afterwards set down in a series of autobiographical letters, addressed to her friend the Duchess of Portland, Prior's ' lovely little Peggy.' Here the personages are half-hidden under romantic names ; Pendarves is ' Gromio,' and Lord Lansdowne ' Alcander.' The writer signs herself, not very aptly, ' Aspasia ' ; she was a good deal less brilliant and more domestic than the friend of Pericles. She had escaped all her admirers except Pendarves, and had found in the solid and humorous Delany the man to her mind. She was to have a second widowhood of twenty years ; and she saw the world, and read the books of the day, and wrote her letters, all the time. She knew every one : the Duchess of Queensberry, and Mrs. Montagu, and the learned sisterhood. She had been friendly with John Wesley, and they

had exchanged serious letters. She was kind to Fanny Burney; she was highly favoured, and also pensioned, by George the Third; and she lived until the eve of the French Revolution.

Mrs. Delany's tastes and aversions, in intellectual matters, are of all the more interest for being typical and conventional. She adored Handel; read, in her youth, the long-winded romances that were still in vogue; wept over *Clarissa*, but could neither 'laugh nor cry' over *Amelia*; judged that '*Fingal*, the Erse poetry,' was 'melancholy but very pretty'; and did not approve of Hume or Rousseau. She read grave orthodox books, and wrote of Berkeley's *Alciphron*:

> Our Sunday reading is the *Minute Philosopher*. What a work of genius is that! How beautiful the style, and for sense and wit surely nothing can exceed it!

She took the *Rambler* to while away a journey; and found Chesterfield's letters 'useful as to polish of manners, but very hurtful in a moral sense.' If good looks, good nature, and a tried and steady virtue, do not give a claim to speak platitudes, what does? But in her social record Mrs. Delany is gently vivacious, and her note is a quiet prudence and independence. She has a gift for friendship, bears no malice, and sets down comparatively little scandal. Her letters are a treasury for the student of dress, and of the suppers, masks, entertainments, and diet of the gentle classes. She instructs us, too, in their code and language of courtship. Mrs. Delany writes the pure plain English, not pedantically correct, of a well-nurtured and well-read lady. She was known, in her later years, for her elegant skill in cutting, out of paper, 'flower mosaics,' some sheaves of which are now in the British Museum.

Mrs. Delany's note of propriety and breeding, like her interest in books, links her with the professional authoresses now to be noticed. About the middle of the century they came to be called, and to call themselves, 'bluestockings'[1]: a term at first used not in derision, but in respect, if with a touch of raillery; and sometimes also used of men. Its origin is disputed; but the accounts agree in applying it to an unceremonious article of male dress, worn at a social gathering. It had been used in the previous century of the rough garb of certain Puritan members of parliament. It now came to denote the ladies who led and attended a special kind of assembly, or who were akin to them in their tastes. Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu and Mrs. Agmondesham Vesey of Bath were the chief of such hostesses. The movement

was really a triple protest: first, against the ideal of the purely domestic and inarticulate woman; secondly, against the assumption that men and women could not talk as comrades on equal terms; and further, against the superstition that they could only meet for cards, for politics, or for scandal. These pastimes were barred; and the talk, instead, was to be literary and intelligent. The hospitality was also sometimes on a lordly scale. The bluestockings included, indeed, retiring women like Mrs. Carter; but they all, in some measure, shared in these purposes, and moved in or near the same social circle. There was no 'bluestocking club' of a formal sort.

X

Mrs. Elizabeth Carter[1] (1717-1806), whose translation of Epictetus continues to be reprinted, is also notable for her letters. They were published after her death in seven volumes, though there is no sign that she meant them ever to appear; and they are addressed to Mrs. Montagu, to Mrs. Vesey, and to her most intimate friend, Miss Catherine Talbot. Mrs. Carter travelled abroad; she sometimes visited London, and knew many literary persons, including Richardson, Bishop Butler, Lord Bath, and Dr. Johnson, who praised both her puddings and her Greek; but spent most of her homely and studious life at Deal, where her father was the perpetual curate. She gives a happy account of her day: how she rose early, scrambled alone through the bushes in the fresh air, cheerfully chatted at breakfast, read and wrote through the working hours, and was gay in the evening. This was in her youth; and in later life she wrote, 'I grow on faster and faster to my rock.' Her house was covered with ivy, which her father had spared at her petition, and she had an open view of the country on the one side and of the sea on the other. At sixty-two, she would still go out at daybreak, listening to the cock-crow and the noise of the tide, and reflect:

> Very great reason indeed have I to be thankful, at my age, to have my imagination just as lively and capable of the most vivid impressions as it was in the gayest season of youth.

Such a temper speaks for itself, and belongs to no mere bookish dame. Mrs. Carter tells little tales of the countryside, and of the alarms of invasion on the coast, in a natural style. Now and then she drops into the conscious manner from which few authoresses of the time except Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

were free: 'I hear the owl sing his farewell note to the departing shadows of night.' Often we wish that Mrs. Carter had read less, and had given freer rein to her impressions. She was sensitive to music, and tells us something of herself in a single sentence:

> Everybody I ever loved or admired, every conversation that struck me with peculiar pleasure, every fine passage of a favourite author, the powerful magic of Mr. Handel conjures up to my thoughts.

Much of her correspondence is devoted to her 'favourite authors,' or to those of whom she disapproved, and throws a clear light on the tastes and reading of the most learned English lady of her generation. Elizabeth Carter never married; but she assumed, as custom was and as beseemed her standing, the style of 'Mrs.' She came to command many languages: not only Greek, Latin, and French, and some Hebrew, but Italian and German; and she was at least on bowing terms with Portuguese and Arabic. This we know from others; her own letters make no parade of knowledge. While a young girl, she translated odes from the pseudo-Anacreon; and, in later youth, some works from Italian and French. Afterwards she is seen steadily working through the ancient classics, including the Greek historians (Polybius being much admired for his 'good sense and *droiture*') and Tacitus. She sends off to Mrs. Montagu an account of Plato's views on poetry, and judges that Euripides, in his tender passages, is 'at least equal to Shakespeare.' Her translation of 'all the works of Epictetus which are now extant' was long in preparing, and appeared, with great applause, in 1758. It is adorned with notes, and prefaced by a business-like sketch of the Stoic philosophy. Thomas Secker, who in that year became Archbishop of Canterbury, and also Miss Talbot, had prevailed on her modesty to undertake the work; and Secker influenced its execution in more than one way. He advised, very soundly and also successfully, that the style should be plain, saying, in somewhat eccentric grammar,

> Why would you change a plain home awakening preacher into a fine smooth polite writer of what nobody will mind?

Mrs. Carter was very devout and orthodox; and we can probably discern, in her preface, the caution of the prelate through the apprehensive language of Miss Talbot; who, in view of the 'pride and harshness of the Stoic doctrines,' suggests that 'in

this infidel age' it would be well to guard the fort with 'proper notes and animadversions.' Mrs. Carter sensibly rejoins that Epictetus 'will be read by none but very good Christians.' Nevertheless, she provides due 'animadversions,' and points out the superiority of the Christian creed. But she contrives to satisfy her friends and also the shade of Epictetus by observing that immoral persons, if they should reject Christianity for Stoicism, 'find very little advantage' in that stringent code. The book, an imposing quarto, was acclaimed at once, and made Mrs. Carter's reputation.

Her opinions on modern writers are always her own. Voltaire is a *wretch*; and it is a great pity that Horace Walpole ever wrote anything but *Castles of Otranto*. Mrs. Carter, indeed, can hardly be blamed for agreeing with Johnson and Burke that, as she puts it, the new French philosophy 'tries to cheat mankind out of all that is worth living for, and all that is worth dying for.' And it is natural that a contemporary should admire both *Evelina* and the tales of Mrs. Radcliffe. She was cold, we learn, to Burns and to Chatterton, but lived to enjoy *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. As will be noticed later (Ch. VII.), Mrs. Carter has one special title to honour: she saw the calibre of Fielding more clearly than any literary person of her time. Richardson she knew and admired, though not without reserves. He had printed in *Clarissa*, without leave, her very mediocre *Ode to Wisdom*; and Mrs. Carter relates that she 'immediately wrote a *twinkation*' to him on the matter, receiving a most civil reply. He consulted her, and also Miss Talbot, and took their advice, concerning the features of the perfect gentleman who was to be Sir Charles Grandison. With Miss Talbot she exchanges hopes and fears about Clarissa, and talks of the Grandisons as though they were alive. Yet she would not join the Richardsonian faction; she praises *Joseph Andrews* admirably, and reproaches Miss Talbot for speaking in 'outrageous' terms of *Tom Jones*. In *Andrews* there is a 'surprising variety,' she declares, 'of nature, wit, morality, and good sense': a finding upon which we need not try to improve.

XI

Mrs. Carter conversed with her friends chiefly on paper, and many of her opinions are struck out in such debates. She was diffident in company and disliked entering a roomful of persons; but she writes easily and frankly. Her letters to Mrs. Vesey belong to her middle life; they are on the whole graver, and it

must be said duller, than the others. Those to Mrs. Montagu are freer, and full of interest; but her true confidant was Miss Talbot. This lady was the younger of the two, but only by four years; the correspondence begins in 1741 and continues till her death in 1770. Catherine Talbot lived and breathed in high clerical circles. Her father was an archdeacon, and, with her widowed mother, she stayed in the household of Secker, moved in his orbit, and saw more and more of good society as he rose in the Church. Not a scholar like Mrs. Carter, she was a tireless reader, read several languages (including some Latin), and painted in water-colours. She was acquainted not only with Mrs. Montagu and Mrs. Delany and Richardson, but with Lord Bath, and Lyttelton, and the Duchess of Somerset. She left some writings; and Mrs. Carter published after her death the brief *Reflections on the Seven Days of the Week* (1770), a series of neat, featureless exhortations. Her *Essays* (1772) are little exercises, gently didactic, and include fairy tales, dialogues, prose pastorals, and imitations of Ossian. A certain mild, not unpleasing complacency rules in Miss Talbot's works and letters; but the letters are much more sprightly, and have a grace of their own. Mrs. Carter and Miss Talbot toss the worsted ball to each other with much agreeable ceremony, even archly, even smartly; their keenest strokes are prompted by the dispute over Fielding. Mrs. Carter, naturally, has the stronger wrist; but she handsomely allows her friend to score some points. The younger lady inclines to preciousness of diction. A cheerful and happy person until her health failed, she feels called upon to exclaim that 'this finger-ache of life will be all over with a little patience.' She is attracted by the Stoics, and gravely states that 'circumstances, you know, are all but externals, and the immovable Self should be the same in all.' Also she reads Pascal; but 'utterly disclaims [a pleasing word] all in him that is unsociable, harsh, and gloomy.' Miss Talbot also reads Dante; she even likes Ariosto; and she makes concessions about *Amelia*; the heroine of that tale was 'an excellent wife,' but '*why did she marry Booth?*' The italics are not Miss Talbot's; and the question is a revealing one.

The correspondence of these two ladies, pale as it is over considerable spaces, is not discouraging to read. The breeding is perfect; the eagerness for friendship, for books, and for the spread of virtue, is genuine; and, above all, the gospel of cheerfulness is preached and practised, especially by the younger writer. In her *Reflections* (upon Friday) Miss Talbot writes that those people are

much to be esteemed, and greatly to be pitied, who . . . dare not allow themselves the most innocent conveniences, and most harmless, and on many accounts useful and necessary, pleasures.

This, no doubt, was the liberal atmosphere of Lambeth. And in a letter to Mrs. Carter, whose taste is for solitude, she pleads that even in ' high and gay life ' a firm and rational mind need not become empty, and can entertain itself in spite of the surroundings. These letters, indeed, give us the best and most enduring legacy of the learned, or so-called ' bluestocking,' circle, which otherwise has left so little mark on literature.

XII

We think of those old domestic volumes of dried petals, gummed so symmetrically upon brown paper, which we saw in childhood, when we turn over the *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind* (1772), a work once greatly in request, and written by Mrs. Hester Chapone, born Mulso. A lady of some attainments, Mrs. Chapone (1727-1801) translated scraps of Metastasio, exchanged sonnets with Thomas Edwards, author of the *Canons of Criticism*, and wrote an ode beginning ' Come, Epictetus,' which was prefixed to Mrs. Carter's version of the philosopher. She also led the chorus that encircled Samuel Richardson ; and her type must represent a large section of his public. The *Letters*, addressed to a girl of fourteen, ' my dear niece,' portray the ideal, the negative woman with perfect complacency. Not that the creature is to lack cultivation. She should read Homer and Virgil, remembering always that the gods in the *Iliad* are really moral symbols ; she should study Milton, and even Shakespeare, and also the *Ramblers* and *Adventurers* ; she must acquire an outline of history from Rollin, Robertson, and even Voltaire ; also of geography ; and she should refine her English by a study of Sir William Temple's *Essays*. But above all, the pattern lady must make sure that she is a ' child of God,' and not a ' child of destruction ' who is to be ' punished with eternal death hereafter.' This secured, and the scriptures well studied, she must be reasonable in every action, regulate every affection, control every spurt of temper, and master every polite accomplishment. She must be a mistress of ' domestic economy.' She must instantly drop any married friend who shows a sign of ' tolerating the advances of a lover.' This neat programme for the extinction of the natural soul is dedicated to Mrs. Montagu, who had, we learn, ' corrected it with some strokes of her

elegant pen.' Mrs. Chapone, as she tells us elsewhere, had in her own youth had a temporary fit of 'mysticism,' and had believed in the 'disinterested love of God.' But this was soon over; and she pauses to find an excuse for Fénelon, who had been led into such errors purely owing to the 'riches and strength' of his imagination.

XIII

Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu[1] (1720-1800), so long applauded for her wit and brilliancy, is now remembered more as a personage than as a writer. If we search her mass of letters, the wit can be found; but it is swamped in their unconscionable prolixity; and her book on Shakespeare is grey reading. But no woman did more to lower the barriers between the great world and the republic of writers. Her good deeds were many; she won the firm regard of Burke, of Lord Bath, of Lyttelton, and of many others; she was the friend of the intellectual class; and she was a liberal and catholic-minded hostess. It is unlucky that Mrs. Montagu was swathed so deeply in the consciousness of her own wealth and station; her life seems to have been, as it were, a huge tissue of social connections, rather than her own. At the age of twenty-two, the brilliant Miss Elizabeth Robinson married a rich gentleman, Edward Montagu, of mathematical tastes, and much her senior. The alliance opened for her doors at which she was knocking, fulfilled her intense desire for recognition, and earned her gratitude. She writes, smugly enough, to her husband, contrasting her fate with that of a sister who had married ill:

> This, my dearest, is my happier lot, enriched by your fortune, ennobled by your virtues, graced by your character, and supported by your interest.

Mr. Montagu died in 1775; and his widow, still further 'enriched,' built yet larger mansions, entertained the new generation, and became an admired relic of the past. She outlived Middleton, Richardson, Young, Sterne, Garrick, Johnson, and Burke, all of whom she had known, and upon most of whom she pronounced her verdict.

Of Young, in his retreat at Welwyn, she gaily observed that he lived

> happily opposite to a churchyard, which is to him a fine prospect; he has taught his imagination to play with skulls, like the Grave-digger in *Hamlet*.

She duly admired Richardson ; but she cannot have taken the *Clarissa* fever very badly, when she could remark upon 'the great fault of my friend's writings : *there is too much of everything.*' For Sterne, who was allied to her by marriage, Mrs. Montagu felt an indulgent contempt ; and she observes, perhaps with more wit than precision, that he is as 'harmless as a child ; but often a naughty boy, a little apt to dirty his *frock.*' Mrs. Montagu and Burke were close friends ; he gave her a copy of his essay on the *Sublime and Beautiful* in 1756, and she lived to rejoice at the success of the *Reflections* in 1790. With Johnson her relations varied. He seems to have been in high favour until he blasphemed the memory of Lyttelton in the *Lives of the Poets.* The breach was partially healed ; but when he died Mrs. Montagu could write, sourly enough, that

> living poets need not fear Dr. Johnson should write their memoirs after they are no longer able to refute calumny.

In her later years she met an observer as cool and alarming as herself. The records of Miss Burney show more respect than liking for the veteran lady who, so she pronounces, had not the *don d'aimer.* But this was less than just. Mrs. Montagu touched the circle of the 'blues'; and it was Johnson who said she was their 'queen.' She became intimate with Mrs. Carter, though the modest learned lady had dreaded to encounter a personage so vocal and so brilliant of plumage. But Mrs. Montagu had perceived her diffidence, and writes with unusual warmth :

> You had heard I set up as a wit ; and people of real merit and sense hate to converse with witlings. . . . I am happy you have found out I am not to be feared ; I am afraid I must improve myself much before you find I am to be loved. If you will give affection for affection, *tout simple*, I shall get it from you [*i.e.*, love].

The two ladies went on tour together in 1763, and the translator of Epictetus watched the vanities of Spa.

XIV

There is nothing remarkable in Mrs. Montagu's judgments of books except a strong disposition to keep her head. This is well seen in her reception of the 'Highland Poems.' It was a custom of the *bas-bleus* to drink from the shell of a nautilus 'to the immortal memory of Ossian.' She shared Lyttelton's doubts as to their genuineness, but admired them. She

subscribed for Macpherson's trip among the Gaels. She was told that he was getting a hundred pounds a year in the Highlands for 'translating' them; and replied that *if he were writing them*, it should be 'a thousand at least.' The point of view that if Macpherson were a forger, then he was a genius, was still obscured in the dust of the debate. Mrs. Montagu's independence of mind is seen in her comparison of Warburton to a library containing many volumes; but the librarian, she adds, is 'without judgment and without taste.' Her great demonstration, by which her note as an author was established, was against Voltaire. Provoked by the increasing vogue of Shakespeare in France, and not least by the translations of Letourneur, Voltaire had redoubled, in terms that are well known, his reproaches against the barbarian. Mrs. Montagu's rejoinder was the once celebrated work, with its leisurely title, the *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespear, compared with Greek and French Dramatic Poets, with some Remarks upon the Misrepresentations of Mons. de Voltaire* (1769). The book does not seem to have been reprinted for a century past; but it ran through six editions in forty-one years. It is not promising to be told that

> Nature and sentiment pronounce our Shakespear to be a mighty genius; judgment and taste will confess that as a writer he is far from being faultless.

The argument, soundly enough, starts from Pope's saying that to judge of the poet by Aristotle's rules is 'like trying a man by the laws of one country who acted under those of another.' But Mrs. Montagu takes the unfortunate line that Shakespeare was a genius who did wonders in the 'dark shades of Gothic barbarism.' When he introduced ghosts and witches, he had to do his best with those 'phantoms that walked the night of ignorance and superstition.' Two years before, Lessing, who was unknown in England, had dealt with the subject otherwise, contrasting Shakespeare's phantoms with a certain ghost of Voltaire's, who had walked on the stage in broad daylight, and had 'frightened many people, but not much.' Yet Mrs. Montagu's arguments have a faint resemblance to Lessing's, like that of a rushlight to an arc-light. She too holds up the Greeks as a pattern, and disparages French tragedy. But Corneille still survives her attacks; and her expositions of Macbeth and Falstaff, which suggest school lectures, come to little. The sting, for Voltaire, lay in her exposure of his mistranslations of Shakespeare, or, as Mrs. Montagu calls them,

'the miserable mistakes and galimatheus [*galimatias*] of this dictionary-work.' Her book was presently known in France, and was afterwards translated. In 1776 she was in Paris, and attended a sitting of the Academy. Here she heard D'Alembert read out a declamation of Voltaire's against Shakespeare and his defenders. Mrs. Montagu calls this harangue 'a most blackguard abusive invective.' But it was mostly repetition, and seems to have fallen flat. Even Voltaire could not rail back the tide; although afterwards, in the preface to his *Irène*, he returned to the charge, alluding with polite contempt to the English authoress. In England the *Essay* received a round of applause; and Johnson, although he growled that there was 'not one sentence of true criticism' in the book, admitted it to be 'conclusive *ad hominem*.' He was one of the few Englishmen who had a right to speak; his own *Preface* had appeared four years before; and otherwise there was little enough 'true criticism' of Shakespeare in the land.

It is fair to add that Mrs. Montagu also wrote a sprightly 'imaginary conversation.' It was one of her three contributions to Lyttelton's *Dialogues of the Dead* (1760), and does something to redeem that dreary volume. The persons are Mercury and a 'modern fine lady'; and an extract may be allowed to show Mrs. Montagu writing at her best:

Mercury. You must be content to leave your husband and family, and pass the Styx.

Mrs. Modish. I did not mean to insist on any engagement with *my husband and children*; I never thought myself engaged to *them.* I had no engagements but such as were common to women of my rank. Look on my chimney-piece, and you will see I am engaged to the play on Mondays . . . [etc.] and it would be *the rudest thing in the world* not to keep my appointments. If you will stay for me till the summer season, I will wait on you with all my heart. Perhaps the Elysian fields may be less detestable than the *country* in our world. Pray have you a fine *Vauxhall* and *Ranelagh*? I think I should not dislike drinking *the Lethe waters*, when you have a full season.

XV

Hardly within the land of shadows and but faintly remembered even by the curious are the verse-mongers of Batheaston and their president Anna, Lady Miller.[1] This good-natured dame and her husband Sir John Miller, or Riggs-Miller, cherished social ambitions and drew round them a company of rhyming admirers. A ritual was devised of which

the central object was a Roman urn, the 'Batheaston vase' that was bemocked by the wits and pressmen of the hour. Poems, at a morning 'levee,' were drawn out of this receptacle and read aloud, wreaths of myrtle being adjudged to the best composers. The results were printed in four volumes as *Poetical Amusements in a Villa near Bath* (1775-1781). The sixty-five contributors include, besides the hostess, Anstey, Garrick, Richard Graves, and Hayley. Anna Seward,[1] the 'swan of Lichfield' (1747-1809), is there also, one of the last survivors of these inimitable, 'precious' ladies. Her juvenile letters begin about 1764, and it would be tempting to quote from them; but Miss Seward, as a versifier and correspondent, really belongs to the following age; and her poems, by her own request, were to be edited—somewhat ruefully—by Sir Walter Scott. Another dipper in the vase was Edward Jerningham,[2] that active dabbler in letters, who moved on the fringe of many sets, being acquainted with Burke and Walpole, with Joseph Warton and Mason, and with the Regent; and whom Gifford chastised with his wonted truculence in the *Baviad*. Another lively and destructive account of the Batheaston circle, in the vein of *Evelina*, is given by Miss Burney, an eyewitness. Most of these *précieux* and *précieuses* were provincials who wrote nothing of any account; they are odd harmless birds who haunted and preened themselves in a forgotten backwater. Mrs. Vesey, the 'sylph,' and Mrs. Boscawen, are among them. Hannah More (1745-1833), a much more salient person, though now only a name, knew them all, and pleasantly described the *Bas-Bleu*; but she flourished chiefly after their day. This chapter may end, for contrast, with an allusion to two more adventurous ladies, not writers by calling, who travelled boldly and faced the open world.

XVI

The *Journal* of Miss Janet Schaw,[3] describing her voyage to the West Indies, North Carolina, and Portugal, is a modern discovery. In 1774 this Edinburgh lady, at the age of about thirty-five, started overseas with her brother Alexander, her woman Miller, and some young American people who were bound for home. No evil weather, or discomfort, or danger, could stay Miss Schaw's pen; and for two years she kept up a detailed diary, intended for the eye of a friend at home. A poetic soul, she was comforted much by her books, and more by her eloquence. Alone upon deck in the darkness before the dawn, she exclaims:

I soon found amusement from joys that were past, pleasingly mournful to my soul. What would become of me if I was unacquainted with your three favourite authors, David, Job, and Ossian!

It is pleasant to find Macpherson in such company, consoling his compatriot. And this good Scot, in the midst of a storm, showed her pluck by reading aloud to her companion passages from Lord Kames's *Elements of Criticism*, 'with much seeming attention.' There came a lull, and they 'discovered we were meeting death like philosophers, not Christians; with Lord Kames in our hands in place of a Bible.' In this journal there is a swift variety of scene and colour. The wretchedness of the herded emigrants on board; the easy, sunshiny, hospitable life of the Antiguans; the pleasures of strange foods and fruits; the public flogging of a negro woman at St. Kitts, which was at first appalling to see, though the horror, for Miss Schaw, presently 'wore off'; the landing at Cape Fear, and the dread of being tarred and feathered as loyalists by the Americans; the escape to a British frigate; and the final trip to Lisbon, still, twenty years after the earthquake, 'almost entirely a ruin': all this and much else is copiously and delightedly set down. Miss Schaw's Protestantism, though ever 'staunch,' was enlarged by the sight of Catholic ceremonies. These inspired in her, perforce, a 'sort of reverential awe,' and a new tolerance for other cults; and she muses on the double-edged text, 'Think ye those on whom the tower of Siloam fell were sinners above all others?'

Lastly, there is much virtue in the letters of Mrs. Calderwood [1] of Polton, who in the year 1756 travelled in the Low Countries with her husband, her children, and her retainers. She passed through England in a critical spirit; and, as a sound Protestant, was much amused by Roman Catholics and foreigners. Mrs. Calderwood had a thirst for information and an eye for types; and she talked to every one, even to a Jesuit who had formerly been a Scotch smuggler:

> He told me all about his conversion, and the rules of their society. I said I had never heard of one taking such a stride at once, as from the top of the kirk of Scotland to the top of the kirk of Rome. 'Did you not,' says I, 'set your foot upon episcopy in the way?' 'Episcopy,' says he, 'is noncence [*sic*]; it is just a bastard popery.'

Mrs. Calderwood's descriptions are racy and sometimes Smollettesque. She watches the seasick party on the packet; and relates, with minute and disrespectful particulars, the pro-

fessing of a nun in the Netherlands. This nun was 'about thirty, not handsome, being black [dark], with a very low forehead, and, in short, one who might be spared.' The officiating priest was 'as like an old Aaron as ever I saw anything in my life.' At Spa she falls among the Jews, and indeed falls upon them:

> There was a family of Jews there, Minheir Pinto from Amsterdam, his lady, daughter, and son-in-law, another daughter and two sons, the oddest-like animals ever was seen, with high noses, and black round eyes set close to them, like so many owls; they were the keenest dancers and the worst at it ever was. After the company had looked with wonder at their dancing for several nights, and the men had begun to shun dancing with them (for they always asked them), Lady Hellen and Lord Carless danced a strathspey minuet; whenever the Jews saw that, they fell to it; they lap, they flaghtered so like hens with their feet tied together, that you might have bound the whole company with a straw; and they were delighted.

We also have a glimpse of the lovely Maria Gunning, Countess of Coventry; who, so far from finding favour, is noted by Mrs. Calderwood as 'a pert, stinking-like supercilious hussy,' who was 'in *dishabille*, and very shabby drest, but was painted over her very jawbones.' This notable, stridulant Mrs. Calderwood might have walked out of a Waverley Novel; and we like to learn that she was the great-niece of Janet Dalrymple, the original of the Bride of Lammermoor.

CHAPTER IV

THE ESSAY : AND GOLDSMITH

I

Until late in the century, in spite of the lure of the novel and the stage, the public never lost its appetite for the kind of essay [1] that Steele had invented and Addison improved. They had countless followers ; and the original pattern, though often obscured, was never quite effaced. The periodical article, as Addison conceived it, was a new form of art. Its length and framework were strictly defined. It was not, like the essays of Bacon, a mosaic of notes, quotations, and epigrams ; nor, like those of Montaigne, a discursive meditation that might run to any length. The *Spectator* was printed on a single leaf. Steele saw that the essay must be short ; and Addison, that if it was short it must be perfect. Perfection meant a nice proportioning of parts, and unity of theme and tone : *tout sujet est un.* The thing, in Aristotle's phrase, must be comprehensible at sight. No sentence, no word, no cadence, must jar upon the reader or tax him too much. Addison has always been duly praised for his English ; but his instinct for design upon a small scale is still more noteworthy. His best papers are like good light silver-work which will bear to be turned over and inspected from any side. As for the matter, it was to be new, or to seem new, and yet to seem self-evident ; never disconcerting, or provocative, or strange. It was instinct with his gentle, cold humour. And Addison is at his best, not when he is handling ideas, for then he is often commonplace, but when he is exhibiting scenes and persons, Sir Roger at home or the fashions of ladies in the theatre. Nothing could seem easier to imitate.

Another canon was never to be wholly forgotten. Not only must there be no politics, no mud-throwing, and no gutter-gossip ; but the satire, however sharp and sure, must not strike at a vital part. The reader must not be frightened by the sight of blood. The temper which the best essayists set before themselves was the temper of Addison, not that of Swift. Even Chesterfield and Johnson, both hard hitters, were somewhat

restrained by this model. And the style which was *not* to be acceptable is exemplified by Swift himself. He made several contributions, in the years 1728-9, to the *Intelligencer*, conducted in Dublin by his friend Thomas Sheridan. Some are political; but in the seventh number he drew the character and career of one 'Corusodes,' in his grimmer manner; and it is a relief, after wading through the pages of so many watery followers of Addison, to turn to this:

Corusodes, an Oxford student, and a farmer's son, was never absent from prayers or lecture, not once out of his college after *Tom* had tolled. He spent every day ten hours in his closet in reading his courses, clipping papers, or darning his stockings, which last he performed to admiration. He could be soberly drunk, at the expense of others, with college ale, and at those seasons was always most devout. He wore the same gown five years without draggling or tearing. He never once looked into a playbook or a poem. . . . He never understood a jest, or had the least conception of wit. [He is admitted to a family where his sister is 'wagewoman to a lady,' and here he reads prayers for a small fee]; he would shake the butler by the hand; he taught the page his catechism, and was sometimes admitted to dine at the steward's table. [He rises in the world.] His sister procured him a scarf from my Lord (who had a small design of gallantry upon her); and by his Lordship's solicitation he got a lectureship in town of £60 a year. [Then, as the Lord 'had now some encouragement given him of success in his amour,' Corusodes gets a living.] If any women of better fashion in the parish happened to be absent from church, they were sure of a visit from him in a day or two, to chide and to dine with them. He had a select number of poor constantly attending at the street door of his lodgings, for whom he was a common solicitor to his former patrons; dropping in his own half-crown among the collections, and taking it out when he disposed of the money. At a person of quality's house he would never sit down till he was thrice bid, and then upon the corner of the most distant chair. . . . He paid his curates punctually at the lowest salary, and partly out of the communion money, but gave them good advice in abundance. [He rises higher.] We leave him in the full career of success, mounting fast towards the top of the ladder ecclesiastical; which he hath a fair probability to reach, without the merit of one single virtue, moderately stocked with the least valuable parts of erudition, utterly devoid of all taste, judgment, or genius. . . .

Swift's freedom of mind is seen in other papers of the *Intelligencer*. No one else, discoursing of 'discretion,' would have called it

a species of lower prudence, by the assistance of which people of the meanest intellectuals, without any other qualification, pass

through the world in great tranquillity, and with universal good treatment, neither giving nor taking offence.

Such writing could not be popular, and the eighteenth-century essay, considered as a means of livelihood, was forced to be popular. Its ideal, within its own limits, was admirable. Purged of scandal, eschewing faction, and never lashing individuals; light-handed, symmetrical, and short; preaching, but preaching pleasantly, and, at its best, preaching through description rather than in the abstract; and being, above all, amusing; the social and moral essay, then, with such aims and qualities, was forbidden to be too hard or too harsh for its public.

II

Thus understood, it had taken, as we know, many shapes in the hands of the original partners. Addison and Steele had provided the solemn ethical discourse, adjusted to the average educated palate; the easy raillery of bad manners and surface foibles; the formal 'character,' often with a Latin label, Callisthenes or Acetus; the less satisfactory apologue, sham-Eastern or sham-African in its setting; the literary paper, delicate and usually genial, if rather timid, in its criticism; and, above all, the faithful peaceful delineation of town or country life. All these varieties persisted; and many excellent essays were produced, especially in the sixth decade. But no writer of the highest rank was an essayist first and foremost, unless we except Goldsmith. No one used the form more happily, and it embodies much of Goldsmith's best work. The essay, therefore, is associated in this chapter with his name. Still, like Johnson, Fielding, and Chesterfield, he is more famous for greater things. For many authors, essay-writing was an incidental means of bread-winning. It is worth while to sift the contributions of the elder Colman, Edward Moore, Hugh Kelly, and Arthur Murphy among the playwrights; of the two Wartons, Robert Lloyd, and Christopher Smart among the poets; and of forgotten wits like Richard Owen Cambridge and Bonnell Thornton. We also light on good things from obscure or nameless hands. Here it must be enough to refer to the chief periodicals that were devoted to the true essay; and to add stray illustrations from a few of the lesser ones. There can be no pretence here of mapping out the whole Sahara—a dismal business, which would reward the social historian more than the seeker after literature.

The Addisonian ideal became clouded all too soon. Politics reappeared, and personal attacks, and slander, all fatal to nice, disinterested art. Also the essay, instead of forming the staple of a whole number, was often a mere item in a miscellany. More than one type of journal arose, in which the purposes of the *Spectator* can hardly be recognised. The first was the party and controversial sheet, for which Swift had set the precedent in his *Examiner*, and Defoe before him in the *Review*. The most potent organ of this kind was the *Craftsman*, started in 1726 and inspired by Bolingbroke (Ch. XIX.). Secondly, there was the periodical miscellany, best represented by the *Gentleman's Magazine*. Founded in 1731 by Edward Cave, and for some time guided by Johnson, this famous and long-living enterprise may be described as a general provision store, containing public news (often copied from other periodicals), *faits divers*, biographies, announcements, reviews, and verses. There is literature buried in the files of the *Gentleman's*; it is the constant resource of the student; and in a history of journalism it would claim a long chapter.

Besides these two species, a third may be just mentioned, the scandal-mongering print. The most notorious and amusing example is the *Terrae-Filius* of Nicholas Amhurst, afterwards the 'Caleb D'Anvers' of the *Craftsman*. *Terrae-Filius* belongs to the former age; it was the most venomous of sundry journals bearing the same title. Amhurst, a man of more parts than scruple, had been sent away from Oxford for loose living; or, by his own account, because of his loyalty to Whig principles in the midst of a University given over to Toryism. His paper appeared in 1721, assailing the antiquated system of disputations, the foibles of heads of colleges, and the absurdities of professors. He derides the rival claims to antiquity of 'these two contending grannies,' Oxford and Cambridge, and will not 'decide which of the two hath most wrinkles.' His hostile, distorted picture casts some real light upon the conditions of the place. But I must not linger over his amusing attacks upon 'squinting Tom of Maudlin,' namely Thomas Warton the elder, the professor of poetry, or upon the story that Warton, in a sermon, 'thundered' out, to his Jacobite audience, the words 'endureth all things, *restoreth* all things,' with 'an emphasis that could not escape the shallowest apprehension.'

On a somewhat higher level are the *Memoirs of the Society of Grub Street* (1737), selected from the *Grub Street Journal* (1730-2), which was edited by Dr. Alexander Russell and John Martyn the botanist. The work is a kind of prose pendant to the *Dunciad*,

and its note is a cheerful and often scurrilous raillery. Cibber is once more attacked; and Bentley's notes on Milton are well, if rather superfluously, travestied. One example will suffice. 'On his crest sat Horror plumed': the critic exclaims:

As if Milton would ever have thought of dressing Horror up with a *plume* of feathers! I will warrant you he spoke it: On his crest sat Horror *plumb* ' . . . [This] gives us an image really dreadful;

for, adds the emender, does Milton not say elsewhere, '*plumb* down he drops'? Again, Stephen Duck, whom Queen Caroline protected, is made the victim of a 'lyric rhapsody' by a 'Mr. James Drake,' and his luck is contrasted with that of Homer and Milton. A few lines may perhaps be quoted to show the quality of the Grub Street muse:

Our British bard, who as divinely wrote,
Sung like an angel, but in vain,
And died not worth a groat.

Thrice happy Duck! a milder fate
Thy genius doth attend;
Well hast thou threshed thy barns and brains
To make a queen thy friend.

It is plain that the art of the essayist had to struggle for its life against these distractions. It never quite went under; it reappears in some of the fiercest of the party organs. *Fog's Journal*, a successor to *Mist's Journal*, was used by the Opposition from 1728 onwards as a light arm to aid the heavier guns of the *Craftsman*. It contains articles by Chesterfield; and in *Common Sense* (1737), which continues the warfare, he wrote some sharp satiric sketches. The note of *Common Sense* is mockery; and the last number contains a merry parody, at Sir Robert Walpole's expense, of the macaronic verse in *Le Malade Imaginaire*. Whoever was the author, there is no mistaking the identity of the *Pantalon* under examination, who thus descants:

Mihi a docto Doctore
Demandatur causam et rationem quare
Argentum facit bene votare?
A quoi respondeo
Quia est in eo
Virtus dormitiva
Cujus est natura
Conscientiam assoupire.

And he explains his principle

Placas multas donare,
Postea haranguare,
Ensuita votare.

III

A closer imitation of the original model is to be seen in the *Female Spectator* (1744-6), conducted by Mrs. Eliza Haywood the novelist (Ch. VI.). The author of *Miss Betsy Thoughtless* can be vivacious; and both here and in her subsequent venture, the *Parrot* (1747), there are little stories which show, as might be expected, the overflow of the new fiction into the essay.

The theme of the innocent oppressed young heroine, already in vogue, was given wider currency by Richardson. In the *Parrot* the tone is a mixture of the insipid and the sensational. We hear of an unprotected girl who loses her inheritance through a forged will, and is beset and harried by the forger, her guardian. Her selfish relations cool off as her cause appears to be hopeless, and she is left in her plight. A more highly-seasoned anecdote is that of the well-to-do young man who, like the rest of the world, attended a hanging out of pure curiosity, found that the condemned man was his long-lost father, and went out of his senses with the shock. The attraction of the novel is seen again in the *Prater* (1756), which ran to thirty-five numbers. The supposed author is 'Nicholas Babble, Esq.,' a wise and acute elderly gentleman who, like Richardson, is the confidant of many young women. He is not above eavesdropping, and reports their private talk. He rebukes the noisy misses who disturb the play and shift their places in their box so as to show off to the best or worst advantage. He describes the interior of a painter's house, where the beautiful Mrs. Canvass and the children live like slatterns, the walls being covered with her portraits; and, in contrast, an idyllic country household, not unlike that of Dr. Primrose. Babble also quotes the words of a damsel who, in the vain hope of attracting an elegant knight, shrinks from the offer of a decent gentleman: 'Well, if I lose Sir Francis, I am sure I can have Belville at any time, and he is better than nobody.' The *Prater* is so little known that one of its harsher passages may be extracted. A poor Grub Street author is being bullied by his bookseller:

> Then, d—n me, said Pinch, but you shall bear a great deal more before I have done with you. What, shall such a fellow as you pretend to talk to *me*? You, who are the offspring of a chimney-sweep and a cinder-wench, begot on a dunghill and littered on a hogstye? Did I not take you, sirrah, from a garret in Hockley-in-the-Hole, naked as you came into the world, where you subsisted on stinking sheep's liver, which you got from writing bawdy ballads, bloody murders, and wretched conundrums? . . . Did I not, to cultivate

your genius, lend you Rochester's poems, Gildon's *Art of Poetry*, Haywood's novels, the *Pilgrim's Progress* ? . . .

After a while the unhappy hack turns and replies in kind, and the bookseller sings small and gives him a respite. This is like a page of Smollett, and possibly shows his influence.

IV

The true revival of the essay came between 1750 and 1760. The most notable journalist of the last ten years had been Fielding (Ch. VII.), in the *Champion*, *True Patriot*, and *Jacobite's Journal*. These periodicals are full of interest ; but presswork was, of course, not Fielding's true line. The purely literary essay, which for some while had languished, reappeared in a venture of two young university wits. That gay and spirited production, the *Student*, ran from January 1750 till June 1751. The original editor was Thomas Warton the younger, then aged twenty-two ; but after the fifth number Christopher Smart became his coadjutor, the words *and Cambridge* being inserted in the second title, *The Oxford Monthly Miscellany*. The contents are pleasingly variegated. Here are to be seen the *Panegyric on Ale*, and the *Address to an Elbow Chair* : here, too, the *Ode on the Fifth of December*, and the lines *To an Eagle Confined in a College Court*. There is as much verse as prose ; light-hearted jibes and parodies abound, as well as serious rhymes and translations from Horace. A brisk impropriety grins out from some of the pages, and once the stanza of Spenser is sadly profaned. Several of these poems found their way later into Thomas Warton's anthology, the *Oxford Sausage* (1764), or into Dodsley's *Collection*. One sally, without a signature, entitled *The Oxonian's Desire to Return to College*, gives the true *genius loci*, in the university that bred John Wesley. The writer wishes to revisit her ' silver rolling stream ' ; but Oxford, for him, is also a refuge from the zealots : [1]

> There no *enthusiastic* rant
> Shall ever wound my patient ear,
> Nor *bigot's* mystic senseless cant
> Nor *methodistic* jargon there
> Shall ever haunt those peaceful cells
> Where sweetly musing *Quiet* dwells.

The editors, at the outset, had promised to avoid all politics, and everything offensive to good manners ; and to cater not only for the lovers of polite letters, but for the students of history and physics. In their farewell, they plume themselves on having

kept their word. Their habit is to lead off with a letter of Baxter's, or a note on Sir Walter Raleigh; or to quote the official correspondence on the expulsion of John Locke from Christ Church. After this there may follow, in blithe confusion, religious meditations, accounts of vivisection by Dr. Haller, 'imitations' of Horace, a speech of Hamlet turned into Latin verse, and lines *To the Pretty Bar-Keeper at the Mitre.* Altogether, the *Student* is a pleasing hotch-potch; and its wit is not more youthful than its solemnity. But more ponderous craft were soon to be launched. The chief of these, besides the *Rambler* (1750-2) and *Idler* (1758-60) (Ch. v.), and Goldsmith's *Bee*, were the *Adventurer*, *World*, and *Connoisseur*. Around them are a crowd of other ventures, most of them soon sunk and forgotten. There was the *Universal Visiter* (1756), to which Smart contributed; the *Gray's Inn Journal* (1752-4) of Arthur Murphy, with its gleams of critical good sense (Ch. IX.); and the *Inspector* (1751-3) of that tireless, virulent, writing quack, John Hill. There are many more titles, which need not be recounted. Little ore has been washed out of all the material, and the curious must be referred to monographs upon the subject. But the three journals next to be mentioned are of another class.

V

Most of the hundred and forty numbers of the *Adventurer* (1752-4) are stamped with the spirit of Johnson.[1] With Joseph Warton, he was a leading contributor; and John Hawkesworth, who edited the venture and wrote the largest share of papers, was his admirer, and follows his style afar off. The usual tone is grave and sententious, the moralising deliberate and unabashed. In the last number Hawkesworth explains that in writing 'for the young and the gay' it was needful to 'amuse the imagination' and to 'engage the passions'; and Johnson characteristically defends the lighter papers on the ground that

> there are, in the present state of things, so many more instigations to evil than incitements to good, that he who keeps men in a neutral state may be justly considered as a benefactor to life.

Also he refutes the notion that moral writings have no influence on mankind; for 'books have always a secret influence on the understanding,' and 'we cannot at pleasure obliterate ideas.' All this may seem to promise ill for our recreation; but there is much in the *Adventurer* that throws a vivid light on contemporary manners. Hawkesworth himself, in his sombre little

stories, shows his knowledge of Richardson and of *Jonathan Wild*; he handles his subject without gloves, and describes, through her own mouth, the supposed trials of a good young girl in a bad house. Miss Mulso, afterwards Mrs. Chapone, also provides a variation on a common theme. Her Fidelia has been brought up as a virtuous deist; refuses to marry for money and without affection, and is mocked and turned away by her friends; becomes, after a struggle (not having the *whole* of true religion), the mistress of a fine gentleman, Sir George Freelove, who throws her off; but at last, on the brink of suicide, is redeemed, and duly converted to full Christianity, by a worthy clergyman and his wife. This was written in 1753, between the death of Bolingbroke in 1751 and the publication of his works in 1754 by David Mallet. A decade or two later, and the shafts against the moral deist would have lost their point. Burke, in 1790, could claim, as we shall see (Ch. XVIII.), that the whole movement had faded from memory. More refreshing are the papers of Joseph Warton upon Shakespeare and the Greek poets, whom he praises in the spirit of Longinus. The words 'Let there be light' had been quoted in the *De Sublimitate*; and Warton produces an imaginary manuscript by the same author, in which the sublime is exemplified by passages from the Prophets and the Book of Job. The *Adventurer* seems to have been modelled on the *Rambler*; but Johnson felt that the ponderous ethical essay was too hard, like sea-biscuit, for the average man, and tried, as we know, to provide easier fare in the *Idler* (1758-60).

VI

The same lesson had been taken to heart in the brightest of the journals that had appeared since the *Spectator*. The *World*, in two hundred and nine numbers (1753-6), was owned by Dodsley and controlled by Edward Moore the playwright and fabulist. A staff was enlisted from which we miss only two names of note. Johnson was busy with the *Adventurer* and the *Dictionary*; Fielding, after writing the *Journey to Lisbon*, died in 1754. The chief contributors were Chesterfield, Walpole, Richard Owen Cambridge, and Moore himself. There were some five-and-twenty others whose names are preserved, besides a number marked 'unknown.' Some of Chesterfield's articles have been named already; as a writer, he overtops all his company; and he sets that note of wit and irony which, as Moore announces, is to mark the journal rather than argument and preaching. The aim is not 'to philosophise the world into

morality.' But whatever the gilding, there must be no doubt as to the purpose of the pill. Some of the stories are near akin to the comedies of the day. One is suitable for the sentimental drama in which Moore delighted: a forsaken Amanda, after many trials, is rescued by a philanthropist. There is also a story of an errant husband who is tracked by his strong-headed wife to the house of his mistress, who does not know he is married. He is repentant, and forgiven, and taken back, with the approval of his now undeceived mistress, after a scene in which all three are present. This roseate kind of ending is a characteristic feature of the comedies of sentiment (Ch. x.). At the other extreme, there is Horace Walpole's tale of Sir Eustace Dawbridgecourt, who married a nun and suffered a serio-comic penance, which the reader must be left to discover and which might have been difficult to indicate even on the stage of Foote. Walpole is the airy mischievous contributor, and remarks that Mr. FitzAdam 'would blush to put his fair penitents to the blush.' FitzAdam is the official name of the editor, and in the last number Moore gives the touching particulars of his latter end. FitzAdam rules out religion and politics from his pages; and, unless Walpole's story be counted an exception, he keeps his promise. He figures as a travelled man who, out of his experience, desires to 'cure all the diseases of the human mind.' Also he abandons (probably with a glance at Johnson) the old essay-baggage of prefatory mottoes and classical allusions.

Another author upon whom the moral gown sits lightly is Richard Owen Cambridge, whose satire the *Scribleriad*, upon his own calling, had its day, and whose papers on the 'led captain' and the 'toad-eater' treat of well-known comic types. He tells some vicious stories at the expense of Pope's deformity; but his most interesting note is that upon the changes of fashion in gardening (No. 76). The country gentleman, who has improved upon nature, leads his guest

> through all the pleasures of unconnected variety, with this recommendation, that it is but a little way from the Palladian portico to the Gothic tower; from the Lapland to the Chinese house; or from the Temple of Venus to the Hermitage.

Several other writers dwell on the same text; and Francis Coventry, the author of *Pompey the Little*, relates how the formal rectilineal style came over with the house of Orange, and filled the gardens with 'yews in the shape of giants, Noah's ark cut in holly,' and the like. Then came the 'great Kent,' William Kent the landscape-monger and architect, who was 'truly the disciple

of nature,' and who ' imitated her in the agreeable wildness and beautiful irregularity of her plans ' ; until, in turn, this fashion grew to excess, and ended offensively in a bewilderment of ' curves and mazes,' and in the rows of ' grotesque little villas ' on the sides of Thames. The *World* is also a storehouse of satire against the craze for things Chinese ; and one writer actually couples together ' the Chinese and Gothic spirit.'

Many of the articles in the *World* are dull and merely cut to pattern, but others sparkle with the humours of the hour. Sir Charles Hanbury Williams depicts, in his easy scarifying way, the trials of a paid companion to a capricious Lady Mary who began by professing affection and goodwill. The poet Edward Lovibond presents the ' pedant ' who, though really a scholar and virtuous gentleman, assumes a mask of folly and ignorance. Lovibond's pleasant poem, the *Tears of Mayday*—the *old* Mayday, eleven days younger than her rival since the 'new style' of calendar—is also in the *World*. John Boyle, the fifth Earl of Cork, tells of a duel between two gentlemen, which was strangely interrupted by a troop let loose from Bedlam. Many papers descant (in the spirit of Swift) on the tricks of servants, and on the abuse of the custom of vails ; or (like Hamlet) on the face-painting of ladies or on their fashions of dress, or of undress. There are ' characters,' of the *Spectator* kind ; a dispute, once more, between the ancients and the moderns ; and several pieces of verse, of which the admirable *Molly* is the best. Molly is in turn a beauty, a neglected coquette, and a devotee who still plays cards. One verse has a genuine pathos :

> Unheeded now at ball or play,
> She hates the pretty, blames the gay,
> Ah ! who one tender thing will say
> To poor deserted Molly ?
> Yet still she lingering haunts the scene,
> Where once she acted beauty's queen,
> And every simple heart had been
> The slave of tyrant Molly.

Moore states that he had this poem from an ' unknown correspondent ' ; but we should like to suspect that it is his own. One other contributor to the *World* may be mentioned, namely Soame Jenyns, who was soon to be assaulted by Johnson for his theological views. Here he writes, in a liberal spirit, on the transmigration of souls ; and his imaginary visits to the country houses of the boisterous Sir John Jolly and the morose Sir Harry Prigg form, as it were, excellent tailpieces to the scenes of

Smollett. Altogether, the *World* is still rich in amusement, and much of it would bear republishing.

VII

The *Connoisseur*, in point of date, overlaps the *World*, as the *World* does the *Adventurer*. It appeared, in one hundred and forty numbers, during the years 1754-6, and was conducted by two young men of lighter calibre, and lighter in spirits, than Johnson or Chesterfield. One was George Colman the elder, whose essays are a kind of trial exercise for his dramas (Ch. IX.); the other, Bonnell Thornton, a journalist of parts who came to little. The pair wrote many articles together, and their shares are not to be disentangled; but we may perhaps credit Colman, with his sharp eye for humours and customs, with the better hits. There is no rancour, much good nature, and abundance of lively social detail, in these joint-stock papers; but we do not expect them to have the *bite*, or the solemn purpose, or the studied style, of the rival enterprises. There is a manifest stroke at Johnson in the disclaimers (No. 71) made by the two partners. They will not 'retail scraps of morality'; they will not be pedantic; they will 'never go out of the common way of expression, merely for the sake of introducing a more sounding word with a Latin termination'; and their aim is to 'laugh people into a better behaviour.' Still, not to fail in gravity, they will duly 'expose the absurd tenets of our modern free-thinkers and enthusiasts'; and this, rather perfunctorily, they do. But 'Mr. Town' (as they term themselves) tells us much about his own hunting-ground. We hear of those bets at White's, already named, upon the question which of two given persons will live longer; of boxing-matches (in anticipation of Hazlitt and Borrow); of the bad manners of 'sea-officers'; of the superstitions of country damsels; of tuft-hunting 'hangers-on,' and of fox-hunting parsons. One passage (in No. 114) is in the best manner of the essay, and is perhaps the earliest sketch of a fancy that has since become familiar:

> Thus, were it possible to conjure up the spirits of the most eminent wits in former ages, and put them together, they would perhaps appear to be very dull company. Virgil and Addison would probably sit staring at each other without opening their mouths; Horace and Steele would perhaps join in commendation of the liquor; and Swift would in all likelihood divert himself with sucking his cheeks, drawing figures in the wine spilt upon the table, or twirling the corkscrew round his finger.

However this may be, we can guess how Swift would have handled any one else who so behaved in his presence.

The *Connoisseur* is also of note as containing some of the early papers of Cowper. He, like Colman, Thornton, and Lloyd, had been at Westminster; and the journal may be called the organ of the young Westminster set. Cowper's sketch of the humours of village churches has his own peculiar pleasantness. But the best contributions are those of Robert Lloyd, whose couplets on the imitators of the old poets and whose *Epistle to a Friend* are the keenest of all the light satires on the poetic fashions of the moment. Also the Earl of Cork, previously mentioned as a writer in the *World*, furnishes some gay papers: one on the London taverns and their victualling, and another on the bearing of a rich town tradesman in his country villa. Thus the *Connoisseur*, in its easy way, shows once more how the essay supports the comedies and novels of the time, presenting as it does the same world and personages, and serving as a *hors d'œuvre* or relish to the weightier courses.

VIII

Towards the end of the period the old-fashioned essay [1] becomes ever staler; after Goldsmith and Johnson it is still abundant, but soon it threatens to die in the odour of platitude. In the year 1777 the journals of Mackenzie (Ch. VIII.) and Cumberland (Ch. X.) are still to come. They delay the end; but the once popular *Essays Moral and Literary* (1778) of Dr. Vicesimus Knox are ominous. Knox was also known for his *Elegant Extracts*, which had a long lease of life, and for his work called *Liberal Education*, which is a smart assault on the university programmes derided by Gibbon and Adam Smith. Even the *Essays* warm to this topic; and one of them (No. 77) professes to describe the Oxonian rites of *doing generals*, and of *answering under bachelor*. Part of the farce, in the latter business, was to 'translate familiar English phrases into Latin':

> And now is the time when the masters show their wit and jocularity. Droll questions are put on any subject, and the puzzled candidate furnishes diversion by his awkward embarrassment. I have known the questions on this occasion to consist of an inquiry into the pedigree of a racehorse. . . . It is reckoned good management to get acquainted with two or three jolly young masters of arts, and supply them well with port, previously to the examination.

Knox was well read, and his essays are full of notes upon

literature; but these are of little interest, save as reflecting, without light or colour, the orthodox ideas of a dominie. He became master of Tonbridge School; and, though not ordained, received the honorary D.D. from Philadelphia, 'as a compliment for the benefit America had derived from his incomparable essays.' He attacks Gibbon, though not by name, for the 'lurking poison' in his work; he has moral reserves when he reads the great novelists, and particularly reprobates Sterne; and he censures the *Lives of the Poets*, not always very soundly, for some of their insertions and omissions (No. 129). 'Why was any more paper wasted on Dorset, Halifax, Stepney, Walsh, and Blackmore?' Forgetting that the plan excluded living writers, he asks why Glover, Mason, and Beattie were left out. 'They would shine among the Hugheses, Pitts, and Savages, like the moon among the diminished constellations.' Knox does not like Johnson; yet, like so many others, he is often infected by the doctoral style. It must be counted for righteousness that he sees the genius of Chatterton, whose shade he addresses in a spurt of high-flying prose:

> Thy sentiments, thy verse, thy rhythm, all are modern, all are thine. By the help of glossaries and dictionaries, and the perusal of many old English writers, thou hast been able to translate the language of the present time into that of former centuries. Thou hast built an artificial ruin. . . .
>
> For now he is dead,
> Gone to his deathbed,
> All under the willow tree.
>
> So sang the sweet youth, in as tender an elegy as ever flowed from a feeling heart [No. 144].

Knox deserves some credit for this tribute, offered while the dispute over the *Rowley Poems* was still going on. He believes that Chatterton wrote them, but leaves the actual pleadings to 'those powerful champions,' Tyrwhitt and Thomas Warton.

The next age was to see a change in the form and fortunes of the essay. The institution of the official reviews, and the adoption of the form by Lamb, Hazlitt, and their company, open a new chapter. I now revert to Goldsmith,[1] the true successor of Addison in this kind of work, and take the occasion to speak of all his writings.

IX

We turn to him, as we do to Charles Lamb or to Steele, for the pure pleasure of his company and as a relief from the weighty,

more formidable minds around him. He does not tax or humiliate us, and has only the most innocent designs upon us. He does not, like Johnson or Coleridge, bid us sit under him and learn. And his language, more than any other of his time, is our language. We are tempted while reading Johnson to translate him into some more familiar idiom; and the large utterance of Burke is peculiar to himself. Common, natural English is always changing, little by little; but that of Goldsmith hardly betrays its date. He says subtle things in the simplest style, so that they seem self-evident; they are like very good spring water, without any taste of the tank.

His Latin epitaph, which says that he adorned all that he touched, shows the feeling of his contemporaries that he could not be classified. We can only call him, as we do Johnson, a man of letters; or, more particularly, a delineator and humorist. But Johnson is the learned clerk, *grammaticus*, with Latin in his every fibre, always responsible and often irritable, always teaching others or himself, and wearing the square cap even in his solitude, even in his jaunts. We do not love him the less, but he puts us on our defence; while with Goldsmith we are off our guard, and his strokes go home all the more. His genius was short-flighted; he left no massive work like the *Lives of the Poets*. We are left wondering at his variety; but it means that he did not work any one of his richer veins to the full. One story, some miniature Lives, a considerable sheaf of essays, two poems of moderate length, some light verses, and two comedies: these are his chief bequest. His ventures in translation and distillation, seldom opened except by explorers, are also full of rewards and surprises, and of the slight sudden sparkles that are peculiar to Goldsmith. His extreme simplicity of manner makes him the more elusive. We say of him what was said of Johnson, that 'he has in him no echo'; and if we try to define him we are driven to Latin, to Horace's *circum praecordia ludit*, or to Johnson's *affectuum potens at lenis dominator*. He had a natural gift for suffering, and, as he says, an 'exquisite sensibility of contempt'; and he had also his Irish resilience. The darker temper of his race, its rhetorical habit, and its fairy folklore, were foreign to him. His sharp experience is transformed into gay and unembittered good sense. He knows the world and his own weaknesses too well to be tragically sorry for himself, or to speak like an oracle; and he puts the best of himself into his work. His vanity, unreadiness, love of finery, and other foibles, vanish in his writings, and would have been little remembered but for Boswell, whose account reveals

a special kind of jealousy. It is jealousy of a man who was even more prone than Boswell himself to blunder, and who retrieved himself as Boswell could never do. But it is Boswell who supplies, if against the grain, the evidence of what Goldsmith really was and of the affection in which he was held. We turn to the *Vicar* and to Lien Chi Altangi for the happy, though not cheaply won, philosophy which shines through his pages and allures posterity.

X

The first stage in the life of Oliver Goldsmith (1728-1774) closes with his settlement in London in 1756. He had wandered far; his story is a 'picaresque' romance; and Austin Dobson has sifted, as far as possible, the history from the legend. Booklore is the smallest part of Goldsmith, but he picked up more of it than might be supposed. At Trinity College, Dublin, or elsewhere, he learnt some Latin, and more French; [1] and at Trinity, it is now suggested, he took his medical degree.[2] He had a more than tolerable knowledge of Shakespeare, and of the English poets and playwrights from Dryden onwards. But Goldsmith's school was hard and gay experience. He carried from home his memories of the 'deserted village,' and of 'Carolan, the Irish bard.' A vagrant by nature, he was in sympathy with social derelicts and scallawags and eccentrics; and he was born to portray, whenever his genius should mature, the Man in Black, the strolling player, and the discharged soldier with the wooden leg. He was one of themselves; he did not write with Addison's detachment of mind. His handful of early letters already shows his gift; and though the humour is still somewhat blunt, George Primrose might have told the story of the friend who, upon Goldsmith's begging him for a guinea, offered him an oak stick for his steed, and then flattered him grossly in the presence of a 'counsellor at law.' The letters describing the ladies and professors of Edinburgh, or the 'modern Dutchman,' are equally pointed. During this period, while fluting and (possibly) 'disputing' his way through Europe, he sent home some specimens of the *Traveller*, which was to bring him fame.

During the years 1756-1764, the Grub Street period, Goldsmith earned some bitter bread, and also revealed his genius for prose. He became a schoolmaster, a bookseller's helot, a hack reviewer, a translator, and presently an essayist. The *Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe* (1759) is in effect a

string of essays. The *Bee*, of the same year, was followed by the first work that showed his wider range, the *Citizen of the World*. It was published as a whole in 1762, but had come out in instalments in the *Public Ledger*. The *Memoir of M. de Voltaire* followed ; and the *Life of Richard Nash* (1762) showed that Goldsmith was master of yet another form, the little biography. His brief *History of England* (1764) was the earliest of the compilations that were afterwards to take a more ambitious form. Some of the *Vicar of Wakefield* was written in the years 1760-1. In 1764 came the *Traveller*. His gifts were now recognised on all hands, and during his last ten years were at their height. He was a member of the Literary Club, and Johnson's friend ; he moved, and despite all mishaps held his own, among some of the best minds of the time. The *Vicar* (1766) and *Good-Natured Man* (1768) were followed by the *Deserted Village* (1770) and *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773) ; *Retaliation* was published in 1774, posthumously. The artistry of these works was not dulled by Goldsmith's many labours, to be noticed below, of a humbler kind. His lyrics and sallies in verse are scattered through his letters, plays, and essays ; they had variegated the pages of the *Bee*.

XI

Goldsmith's mere bread-winning work is always of interest. His early notices in the *Critical Review* and elsewhere, though often mere abstracts, show real catholicity of taste. He can appreciate Burke on the *Sublime* and also the *Genuine Remains of Samuel Butler*. He introduces English readers to the tales from the *Edda*, told in Paul-Henri Mallet's book on Denmark, which was soon to inspire the poets. There is a flash of his impatient good sense in his remark on the theme of Home's *Douglas*—'the preposterous distress of a married lady for a former husband who has been dead near twenty years' ; and he turns restive over a female story called *Jemima and Louisa* :

> A great deal of money, a great deal of beauty, a world of love, and days and nights as happy as heart could desire—the old butt-end of a modern romance.

There are similar strokes in the *Enquiry*, which is Goldsmith's first attempt to cook up a literary *soufflé* out of heavy ingredients. He has, at any rate, the credit of having thought of the subject, which was one suitable for Lessing or Gibbon : it was nothing less than a study of letters and the drama in six countries of

Europe. Goldsmith speaks from his innocent heart when he exclaims that Dante 'addressed a barbarous people in a method suited to their apprehensions.' His dislike of blank verse, however impious, is rationally prompted by the 'disgusting solemnity of manner' in the imitators of Milton—a phrase that well fits the *Night Thoughts*—as much as by his love for the rhymed couplet. 'Nothing,' he adds, 'but the greatest sublimity of subject can render such a measure pleasing.' The allusions to Holberg, some of whose comedies he seems to have read in French, are noteworthy. Goldsmith liked to compare the career of the wandering Dane to his own, to judge by his allusion to the pedestrian tour which was financed by 'a good voice and a trifling skill in music'; and he almost hits the mark when he says that 'the history of polite learning in Denmark may be comprised in the life of one single man.' The *Enquiry* is hardly a book; and the separate light essay was to be for a while Goldsmith's chosen form. Into this old industry, which might seem to have been exhausted by the *World* and its companions, he brought a fresh humanity and humour. He loosened its conventions and improved its temper. The 'mellow and flowing and softly tinted style' credited to him by Washington Irving is already evident. He can, indeed, be almost dull; and he is happiest when he quits moral disquisition for life and its humours. His favourite figure of the philosophic tramp is as far from the Roderick Randoms and Colonel Jacks as he himself is from Smollett or Defoe.

XII

His wanderers are battered, but they share in his own cheerfulness, good sense, and generosity, and accept life as it comes. We feel that they are not the dreams of an optimist, but that Goldsmith has talked with them on the roads or on a tavern bench. The tale of the strolling player who swears 'by the blood of all the Mirabels' is now known to have been conveyed from Marivaux'[1] *Spectateur français*; but it is bettered in the telling. The 'Man in Black' is a better-educated member of the same guild. We should hardly know whether Lamb or Goldsmith had written the sentence, 'I have known him profess himself a man-hater, while his cheek was glowing with compassion.' This Mr. Drybone, in turn a rejected lover, a disgusted flatterer, a pauper, and a pretended miser, contented himself, he says, with thinking

[1] that all my life I should either eat white bread or brown; considered

that all that happened was best; laughed when I was not in pain, took the world as it went, and read Tacitus often, for want of more books and company.

Lien Chi Altangi, the Chinese visitor who watches English manners, is satirically instructed in Westminster Abbey by the Man in Black. 'What is the man who lies here particularly remarkable for?' The answer is that he is 'remarkable, very remarkable, for a tomb in Westminster Abbey.' This tone of gentle fatal irony, in which the voice is seldom raised, runs through the *Citizen of the World*; but once at least the Chinaman speaks in a melancholy strain, and almost with passion; and it is plain that Goldsmith, though he usually avoids the mood of *Rasselas*, could on occasion write the loftier prose:

> Life sues the young like a new acquaintance; the companion, as yet unexhausted, is at once instructive and amusing; its company pleases; yet, for all this, it is but little regarded. To us, who are declined in years, life appears like an old friend; its jests have been anticipated in former conversation; it has no new story to make us smile, no new improvement with which to surprise, yet still we love it; destitute of every enjoyment, still we love it; husband the wasting treasure with increased frugality, and feel all the poignancy of anguish in the fatal separation.

There is one brief, highly-wrought *poème* (No. 117) on the misery to be seen in the streets of great cities; it is in a kind of lyrical prose, and points forward to De Quincey or to Dickens.

The Eastern letters and parables, like the absurd little tale that holds them together, are in yet another style. Goldsmith borrows gaily, and for the most part silently, from many authorities upon China; often actually translates; follows the *Lettres persanes* of Montesquieu and other models; trusts in his public knowing as little as himself of the real East; and keeps the show going by his mother-wit. Convict him of any amount of levying; the result is still his own. He shortens, lightens, brightens whatever he takes. The process is the same as in his *Animated Nature*; only, the characters are not toads and tigers but human beings. The figure of the out-at-elbows Beau Tibbs, with his phantom friends in high life, was to be elaborated, with the emphasis of the stage, in the Lofty of the *Good-Natured Man*. Goldsmith boldly endows his Chinaman with his own sense of humour. The Tibbses, in their 'genteel box' at Vauxhall, snub the pawnbroker's widow as she enjoys her supper, until she feels that her 'very senses were vulgar'; and the last scene, the wedding feast of the Chinese couple, where there is a

quarrel over the way to carve a turkey, is all in keeping; the author, after so much mock solemnity, openly flinging up his cap.

XIII

All these essays [1] are like the leaves of a sketch-book. Some are mere scratches, some are quickly done and yet perfect; and some, whether good or not, are more laboured. Many are like notes for possible stories. Goldsmith's plays and novel have the air of being wrought up from just such material, whether experienced, observed, or invented. In the *Bee* he says that he is 'determined never to be tedious in order to be logical,' and he keeps his word. He puts a new gloss on the old patterns of the imaginary club or the exotic fable, on the description of male or female fashions in dress or of the rites and humours at an English funeral. Also, like the founders of the essay, he talks much of books; and, although to call him a critic would be excessive, his literary tastes and opinions, even when they are only those of his set, have always gone through his own mind and taken its colour. His essay in the *Bee* on the 'Augustan age of England' is full of superstition, and also of flashes of perception. It is half the truth to say that Dryden first 'gave regular harmony' to English and 'discovered its latent powers.' But Goldsmith's own ideal of prose is declared; it is ease and simplicity, and to write, like Sir William Temple, as 'a man of sense and a gentleman.' The 'Augustan age,' in his opinion, seems to begin with Dryden and to close with Bolingbroke; and such a use of the term shows that the new age, that of Johnson and the novelists, thought of itself as *different*, with a different ideal of prose from the last; and also that Goldsmith thought of himself as praising, and perhaps as trying to continue, a style that was on the wane. Still, criticism for him is only a byplay. The seven papers [2] still printed in his works, on 'taste,' 'metaphor,' 'hyperbole,' 'versification,' and the like, are of uncertain authorship, and one of them, on 'versification,' conflicts with his known dislike of unrhymed measures.

His critical taste is well seen in two anthologies which he published in 1767. The *Poems for Young Ladies*, we are told, are 'not only such pieces as innocence may read without a blush, but such as will even tend to strengthen that innocence.' The young ladies (who are sobered at the start by an extract from Boyse's *Deity*) are to know enough of poetry to 'mix in modern conversation.' The work is a typical collection of 'classical' verse, in so far as that is possible. But, even for

Goldsmith, it is not possible; and another style is always breaking in. His own *Edwin and Angelina* is there, and passages from Parnell, and some from Milton; and thus are qualified the impressions left by Pope and Addison. In the *Beauties of English Poetry* the selection is bolder; and the brief notes show Goldsmith's independence. *Alexander's Feast*, he says, has been 'more applauded, perhaps, than it has been felt.' Gray's *Elegy* is a 'very fine poem, but overloaded with epithet'; a remark in which there is a grain of truth. Browne's skits in the *Pipe of Tobacco* are 'rather imitations, than ridiculous parodies.' In the *Letters from a Nobleman to his Son* comes Goldsmith's confession of poetical orthodoxy; for Pope, he says,

> carried the language to its highest perfection; and those who have attempted still further to improve it, instead of ornament, have only caught finery.

Yet elsewhere he is found praising the Elizabethans; and of Lyly he says, unexpectedly, that 'his style is a kind of prodigy of neatness, clearness, and precision.'

XIV

The new music of Goldsmith's verse at once greets the ear. In his two longer poems [1] he does wonders with an instrument that seemed to be worn out—but our heroic couplet is never worn out; in the right hands it is always fresh. In his translation of Vida's *Game of Chess* (*Scacchiae Ludus*), the verse is smooth and delicate, and he varies it, like Dryden, with triplet and Alexandrine. In the *Traveller* he softens and modulates in his own way the metre of Pope. The crackle is gone, and the easier movement reflects the gentler temper of the writer. No dissection can reach the 'hidden soul of harmony'; but the study of prosody helps us on the way. In Goldsmith's couplets the line and the couplet never become indistinct, and the usual pauses (after the fourth, fifth, or sixth syllable) are there; but there is more running on from line to line, and from pair to pair, than Pope permitted himself. For this we can forgive all Goldsmith's flings at the 'unmusical flow of blank verse.' Like Chaucer, he loves to enumerate; and he repeats his opening word with increasing warmth of emphasis, till he closes, not abruptly, but with a pointed line that every one will remember. The first twelve lines of the *Traveller*, with their iteration of *blessings* and *blessed*, and with the climax, 'and learn the luxury of doing

good,' are a case in point. Goldsmith knows the value of echoed sound and of full open vowels in a sequence :

> Pride in their port, defiance in their eye,
> I see the lords of human kind pass by.

He is at his best when his language is not only harmonious but simple and plain.

It is not always simple and plain ; there is plenty of conventional diction. The lawns and bowers, the swains and the warbling groves, are there ; but they are rather pleasing than otherwise, like the faded spangles that relieve a sober texture. The real contrast is between abstract and concrete language, generalities and vision. Goldsmith's readers admired both kinds. But for us the first of them is obsolete, even when it is made as musical as possible :

> And every want to Opulence allied,
> And every pang that Folly pays to Pride.

We feel that Johnson, who in fact contributed some lines to the poem, might be at the writer's elbow. But this manner is often united with the other :

> Here Vanity assumes her pert grimace,
> And trims her robes of frieze with copper lace.

But the truer manner is of no period :

> The village all declared how much he knew ;
> 'Twas certain he could write, and cypher too.

It can, of course, approach to metrified prose, as in the *Description of an Author's Bedchamber*, where the picture has to be squalid, and the rhythm hampered :

> With beer and milk arrears the frieze was scored,
> And five cracked tea-cups dressed the chimney board.

Goldsmith is often compared with Chaucer, and there are lines that would go with little change into the English of the *Prologue* :

> Yet he was kind ; or, if severe in aught,
> The love he bore to learning was in fault.

In respect of poetical scope, Goldsmith does not come into the competition, but he is akin to Chaucer in his natural unsought charm and in his sympathy and humour. Each of them is unspoilt by knowing mankind, and tempts us for a moment to be reconciled to the world.

Goldsmith sets out plainly enough the easy argument of the *Traveller* : it is

> that there may be equal happiness in states that are differently governed from our own ; that every state has a particular principle of happiness, and that this principle in each may be carried to a mischievous excess.

His plan allows him to hit off a few traits of the countries that he has wandered through, and to point many happy sayings that are none the worse for being in rhyme ; poetry we cannot always call them. The writer has seen the dams in Holland, ' where the broad ocean leans against the land,' and the French villagers dancing to the poet's ' tuneless pipe,' and the ' shading elms ' by the Loire, and the ' yellow-blossomed vale ' and ' slow canal ' in the Netherlands. Such things are less abundant in the *Traveller* than in the *Deserted Village*. The village, be it Irish or English or the two confounded, is alive and definite to the mind's eye. Alive, at any rate, in its prosperity ; and lest it should become vague and unrealised in its desolation, Goldsmith, with his simple cunning, *still* imagines it as it was in its day of happiness :

> *No more* the farmer's news, the barber's tale,
> *No more* the woodman's ballad shall prevail. . . .

We care less for the pompous simile of the ' fair female ' who dresses up when her charms are gone, or for the land of ' animated nature,' of scorpions and tigers taken out of books, to which the villagers depart. There is real pathos in the picture of the exiles ; and if there be too much sentiment for our taste, we can correct it by turning to Ford Madox Brown's picture of some other emigrants, with Thomas Carlyle sitting in his cloak. What we remember in the *Deserted Village* is the school, and the schoolmaster, and the dancers, and the parson. They belong to the National Gallery, and we say ' This is a Goldsmith ' as we say ' This is a Reynolds.'

Much of the novelty lay not only in the grace and finish of the form, but in the change of scene and temper. Goldsmith's diction and metre had long been associated with satire and hard brilliance, and with indignation or ill nature. The latest poet of prominence to carry on this tradition had been Churchill, who died in 1764, and whose raking invective still rang in the ears of the town. When the *Traveller* appeared, it was like a shift of the east wind into the warm west. The scene was transferred to the Gallic ' land of mirth and social ease ' ; and, in the *Deserted*

Village, to a peaceful countryside. Goldsmith's light-handed and happy pictures of rural things were new to the eighteenth-century couplet, and were all but free from the old artifices of the pastoral. But he found no real following; for the strain of Cowper is different, and the *Task* is in blank verse. Indeed, Goldsmith provoked a protest. Crabbe, we know, produced the *Village* (1783) as a counterblast to Goldsmith, whose roseate presentment of rustic life he denounced as false. We may be grateful to Crabbe, who gave the naked truth; but he did so at some sacrifice to poetry, and he was wrong about Goldsmith. As well blame the paintings of Morland, or the *Songs of Innocence*, for the idealising process. If the traits, taken singly, are faithful, and if the whole picture has unity and beauty, no more can be asked. True, in Goldsmith the magical lights and sounds of Blake are absent; there is nothing wild, or strange, or difficult, as in Smart's neglected *Song to David*. The easy melody is drawn out of familiar things; and Goldsmith, in his *genre*, comes to his own kind of perfection.

XV

In his occasional verse, which is not copious, the good things are universally known, and sift themselves easily out of the trash. About *Captivity, an Oratorio*, and *Threnodia Augustalis* the less said the better. Nor are his prologues and epilogues of much mark; in truth, very few of the numberless compositions of the sort, except Garrick's and Johnson's, are now good reading. The fables and Swiftian verses are of an average kind. *Edwin and Angelina* is a soft and sweet ditty, but the sentiment is a little *turned*. (Profanely or not, I feel the same about Coleridge's *Genevieve*.) Goldsmith has eight lines of true lyric, 'When lovely woman stoops to folly'; and in his two 'elegies,' on the mad dog and Mrs. Mary Blaize, he finds his real vein, and fills a place of his own, between Prior and Cowper, in the chronicle of light verse. Less often quoted is the jest in the same style *On the Death of the Right Honourable* ——, in the *Citizen of the World* (No. 106):

> His bounty in exalted strain
> Each bard might well display;
> Since none implored relief in vain
> —*That went relieved away.*
>
> And hark! I hear the tuneful throng
> His obsequies forbid:
> He still shall live, shall live as long
> —*As ever dead man did.*

Goldsmith seems to have learnt this device from the French, and to vie here with Voltaire. 'The dog it was that died.' He could hardly excel in neatness, though he does in good temper, the well-known lines on Fréron :

> L'autre jour, au fond d'un vallon,
> Un serpent mordit Jean Fréron,
> Devinez ce qu'il arriva ?
> Ce fut le serpent qui creva.

There remain *Retaliation*, and its merry but rather prolonged companion-piece, the *Haunch of Venison*. The comic anapaestic, in English, is a perilous metre, too apt to trail dowdily along and then to trip and tumble flat. But in *Retaliation* the requirements of the 'character' brace up the lines; concision and balance, united with the effect of an impromptu or *riposte*, are called for; and the result is the quintessence of a hundred evenings in the 'Club,' an institution which did not tolerate ragged talk. It appears that Goldsmith incited Garrick to write his epitaph, which proved to be the famous couplet on 'Noll'; that others of the company wrote other such epitaphs, now lost; and that all these together provoked *Retaliation*. It was not extemporised, but took 'several weeks' to make. The domestic nature of the skit appears at once; Burke, and Garrick, and Reynolds, and Cumberland jostle persons who might hardly be remembered but for these few lines: John Douglas and William Burke, and Joseph Hickey, the father of William Hickey of the *Memoirs*. A culinary simile like that of the *Haunch of Venison* opens the poem, not very promisingly; the rest is all 'character'; and Goldsmith has fixed the popular picture of Burke and Garrick for posterity better than most of their biographers. The lines on Burke tell us why he fell short of success as an orator: those on Garrick are profoundly elaborated: they are the kindest and sharpest of the many descriptions of his foibles; and they leave him *acting* 'as an angel,' and received in heaven by Shakespeare. The sketch of Cumberland is said to have been taken seriously by its subject; but Cumberland was no fool, and this is hard to believe. He was not without humour, and must have seen the jest, whether or no he liked it. The real commentary is Goldsmith's paper on 'sentimental comedy' (see Ch. x.), with its unreal *dramatis personae*; and his opinion, in the 'Club,' must surely have been current talk. The lines on Sir Joshua, which have an unfinished air, are perfect as far as they go, and are a tribute to perhaps the only member of note who was never

disliked and never felt to be oppressive. Among the rest, the chief names that we miss are those of Boswell, Beauclerk, and Bennet Langton, besides Johnson himself. Goldsmith's lines written in the same measure, and inserted in his letter to Mrs. Bunbury upon the game of loo, may fairly be named along with *Retaliation* for their ease and spirit.

XVI

We have learned little from Goldsmith if we try to find deep elaborate reasons for his genius. If there were anything fresh to say of the *Vicar of Wakefield*, it would have to be simple, in his own manner, which no one can imitate; and so obvious, that the whole world has missed it. This I cannot provide; and it seems idle to fall back upon similes. But we can think of a clear running water, not so deep indeed as the great streams, yet so deep that we cannot see its bed, and with all manner of play and sparkle on its surface. At any rate we can watch it for a moment through the eyes of Goethe,[1] whose tribute to Goldsmith is well known. If the author, in 1770, could have been an invisible spectator, endowed with a knowledge of German, of a famous scene in Strassburg, how would he have recorded it? Herder was reading aloud *Der Landpriester von Wakefield* to a young man of twenty-one, Goethe, and to his companion Peglow (whose comments were 'not of the finest sort,' and made Herder irritable). Herder read without any attempt at dramatic mimicry; not indeed monotonously, but 'as though it were all merely historical, and nothing were in the present.' He could not forgive the young men when they overlooked the slip made by Mr. Burchell in the third chapter; where, describing Sir William Thornhill, he is embarrassed:

> I now found, that—that—I forget what I was going to observe; in short, Sir, he resolved to respect himself. . . .

But the two younger men, being young, took the story as 'present, real, and living,' and showed much emotion, and 'rejoiced like children' when the 'poor, wretched vagrant' turned out to be a 'rich, powerful *Herr*.' At all this, we may be sure, the author would also have 'rejoiced like a child'; or would have exclaimed, as on another occasion, '*Très bien dit!*' He might also have been surprised; for nothing is said to show that this audience, an ideal one otherwise, ever laughed. Perhaps they did, and Herder was the less snappish. And if, again, Goldsmith had lived to read the record of this scene,

published more than a generation afterwards in *Aus meinem Leben*, and alluding to a family of German Primroses, the Sesenheims, whom Goethe knew, it is not certain that he would have been overwhelmed by such a testimonial from the first mind in Europe. Goethe enlarges on a sentence in the *Advertisement*, and adds the name of Melchizedek to Goldsmith's announcement that

> the hero of this piece unites in himself the three greatest characters upon earth; he is a priest, an husbandman, and the father of a family.

And Goethe proceeds:

> Imagine such a man, with a temper of pure humanity, strong enough never to flinch from it under any circumstances, and thus at once raised above the level of the crowd, from whom purity and steadfastness are not to be expected; give him the acquirements needed for his calling, and also a cheerful, equable activity—an activity that is even passionate, since it will not miss a single moment in which it may do good: and there he is, sufficiently equipped. Add, at the same time, this needful limitation—he must not simply abide in one small circle, but must pass into another that is smaller still. Endow him with good nature, a forgiving spirit, constancy, and every other praiseworthy trait springing from a resolute nature; and, on the top of all this, give him a cheery indulgence and a smiling patience with his own failings and those of others—and you have a fairly complete image of our admirable Wakefield.

Goethe further praises the Christian morality of the book, which attests the triumph of good over evil, 'and all this without a trace of sham piety [*Frömmelei*] or pedantry'; as well as the pervading irony, which makes it 'not less wise than lovable.' Goldsmith, finally, has 'undoubtedly great insight into the moral world, its value and its frailties.' The reference to irony is welcome; but the lightheartedness and innocent spirit of mischief in the *Vicar*, which meet us in its very first sentence, are left out; and perhaps it was hard even for Goethe to understand an Irishman. He remarks, a little heavily, that he will not omit to mention 'a diligent, rather harsh [*herben*] son, Moses, who imitates his father.'

In his admonitory moods, Dr. Charles Primrose had only to talk like Goldsmith himself, or like his Chinese philosopher. 'That virtue which requires to be ever guarded is scarcely worth the sentinel.' 'I now condemned that pride which had made me refractory to the hand of correction.' His long Tory discourse in the 'magnificent mansion' of the nineteenth chapter

is pure Goldsmith; whether its dulness and solidity are merely meant to be a trait of the vicar, is doubtful. Goldsmith's precious leaf is sometimes beaten out so thin that it is beaten through. But this is only one of the 'hundred faults' which do not matter. 'Our admirable Wakefield,' as Goethe oddly styles him, is Goldsmith in another and a better sense; for he is the chorus to the tale, and the wise commentator who bathes it all in his charitable humour. Yet he is anything but a mere chorus; in a thousand touches, when he edges towards the fire to upset the face-wash, when he talks of monogamy, when he lectures his womenkind helplessly, and rejoices when for once his 'remonstrance had the proper effect,' Primrose lives: and Goethe's portrait gives his rarer qualities to perfection. Certainly, it was Goldsmith's greatest inspiration to let the vicar tell the story. From this all its virtue flows. Through his eyes we see, in delicate distinctness, every personage; including some who do not speak at all, such as farmer Flamborough, 'our *talkative* neighbour,' and his 'rosy daughters, flaunting with red top-knots.' And Primrose is not only the observer, he is the chief sufferer. Yet he is not, like Pamela or Roderick Random, a sufferer self-absorbed and fighting for his own skin. His fate is bound up with that of the innocents who belong to him, and he has to drag them after him, and their woes are his, and he is not happy until they are all safe. It is this strength of natural feeling, of *pietas*, that places Goldsmith, apart from all his other gifts, so high amongst our inventors.

The patchy plot, with its coincidences, has often been gravely forgiven by critics. Probably it is part of Goldsmith's pleasantry to make George, and Olivia, and Jenkinson, turn up at the right, impossible moment. His trick, on such occasions, is to divert the attention by a severe assault upon our feelings:

> I instantly knew the voice of my poor ruined child Olivia. I flew to her rescue, while the woman was dragging her along by the hair, and I caught the dear forlorn wretch in my arms.

And so, when Jenkinson explains that he had, after all, 'got a true licence and a true priest,' and that Olivia is really married,

> a burst of pleasure now seemed to fill the whole apartment; our joy even reached the common-room, where the prisoners themselves sympathised,
>
> and shook their chains
> In transport and rude harmony.

For all this ramshackle construction, the tragic story is arranged with genuine power; and the series of blows which strike the

righteous man but cannot strike him down come at studied intervals, with a breathing-space of idyll between each. As for the humorous punishment of the villain (who, we may remember, had not only taken away Olivia but tried to abduct her sister), we can but say that it is in the spirit of Dr. Primrose the 'universalist,' who thought that all men would be saved. Much of our eighteenth-century prose is sombre and despondent, or sardonic, or ill-humoured. Gray and Johnson were not buoyant men. Smollett was usually ferocious, except in *Humphry Clinker*. Burke's jests are not easy, and he is weighted with thought and passion. Fielding's irony can be of the grimmest. But Goldsmith, in his writings, is happy without effort, and even when he is poignant he manages to leave us expectant of better times.

XVII

Naturally, this temper is least alloyed in his comedies; and they are his best work. Possibly, had he lived, his future would have lain rather in playmaking than in fiction or poetry. Some of his subtler qualities might vanish behind the footlights; but the discipline of the theatre forbade him to preach, or delay, or wander; and his characters, so loud and living and salient, are his lawful children. Croaker and Lumpkin are not, like some of Sheridan's figures, excogitated, or spokesmen merely of the author's wit. A later chapter (x.) will show what Goldsmith did for the redemption of our comic stage, and how pleasant it is to come away from Kelly and Murphy, gifted as they are, and from Cumberland, into his open world with its sane and natural values. It was the over-sodden drama of sentiment rather than the roaring comedy of manners that impelled Goldsmith to seek an antidote. He was also provoked by the condition of the French stage. In the preface to the *Good-Natured Man* he remarks that

> the French comedy is now become so very elevated and sentimental, that it has not only banished humour and Molière from the stage, but it has banished all spectators too.

This was written in 1768, when the ringleader of the *comédie larmoyante*, Nivelle de la Chaussée, had run his course; his best piece, *Mélanide* (1741), lay far behind. In England there was danger still. Garrick's prologue to *She Stoops* is full of hits against the 'mawkish drab of spurious breed,' and reflects Goldsmith's own opinion. He, in his dedication to Johnson, says that the 'undertaking of a comedy not merely sentimental

was very dangerous,' and that Colman had thought as much. Colman, however, took the risk; and the result was pure comedy, neither poetical, nor fantastic, nor merely farcical, nor effusive and tearful, but simply 'Laughter holding both his sides.' Neither here nor in *She Stoops to Conquer* is sentiment ridiculed in the text; and neither play depends at all on our power to imagine an obsolete mode of feeling.

XVIII

In his first piece Goldsmith is still somewhat hampered by the language of the essayist. We hear the voice of the *Bee* or of Lien Chi Altangi, and not merely that of the sententious Sir William:

> There are some faults so nearly allied to excellence, that we can scarce weed out the vice without eradicating the virtue.

The play ends with a volley of virtuous remarks from young Honeywood, the 'good-natured man,' who has come to his right mind. But all formal matter disappears in the talk of the drunken butler, and with the entry of Croaker, whose croak is worse than his bite. He, like Lofty, is a 'humorist' of the Jonsonian kind: a pessimist who enjoys himself, and who makes us share his enjoyment of bad omens and imaginary misery. His parting word shows that he sees the joke of himself:

> Well, now I see content in every face; but Heaven send we be all better this day three months.

For he finds he has foreboded everything but the truth. Also Lofty, with his high acquaintance and pretended influence, is invaluable to the scene, if not quite needful to the plot. He, like Croaker, is an artist happy in his own imaginings. The plot itself is not expected to bear the lens of the cool reader. Foote, in the *Minor* (1760), had used, though in his coarser way, something like the device of the disguised uncle who involves his lavish nephew, for his nephew's good, 'in fictitious distress, before he has plunged himself into real calamity.' And the presence, however improbable, of Olivia leads to a scene of true comic force. She poses as the daughter whom Croaker has never seen since her childhood; in fact, she is betrothed to Leontine his son. Croaker hears that his real daughter has accepted a rich man; and, supposing that Olivia is she, is ready to forgive her. Olivia thinks that he has discovered, and is

blessing, the affair with Leontine. Bursting in, Leontine begins to speak his gratitude, and only just escapes detection when the father cries out, 'Marrying his own sister! sure the boy is out of his senses!' Another scene, the interview of Miss Richland with the bailiffs who figure as her lover's friends, was resented on the first night as 'low,' was withdrawn, and was replaced in the printed version. Goldsmith plays one quiet jest of his own upon his audience. He allows Croaker to thus *improvise* (though incorrectly) the famous sentence of Sir William Temple, 'Life at the greatest and best is but a froward child. . . .'

XIX

Goldsmith's stray debts of all kinds were apt to mount up considerably; and they include his debt, which is now better understood, to French literature. He must have read, and may possibly have seen, Marivaux' little comedy *Le Legs* [1] (1736), which it may be worth while to sketch for the sake of contrast. Here a marquis is embarrassed by the terms of a certain will. If he will marry, or offer to marry, Hortense, he is to have the whole of a great fortune; otherwise he must pay her two hundred thousand francs. The marquis dislikes the notion of the forfeit, but does not care for the lady; he is, in fact, in love with a countess, but is too shy to speak out; and the countess, in her turn, who loves him, is at her wits' end to make him speak. Hortense, again, not only covets the forfeit, but loves a certain chevalier, who does whatever he tells her. So she tries a game of bluff; she will pretend to accept the marquis, and will trust to his then beating a retreat and bearing the odium of the refusal. But behold, not daring to hope for the countess, he accepts Hortense, as a profitable second-best. Through the skill of the two ladies and the tricks of the usual maid and valet the position is cleared up. What Goldsmith borrowed is evident; but in his play the men and not the women supply the driving power. And he transposes the sexes: Hortense is partially represented by young Croaker, Leontine; the chevalier (dismayed at the risks of bluff) by Olivia; and the marquis by Miss Richland. Here too there is a will, and Miss Richland is to be fined if she refuses Leontine. What follows need not be detailed, in so familiar a plot; the reader will see at once where the parallel stops. It shows, indeed, not only Goldsmith's ingenuity, but the great gulf that is fixed between the French and the English, or rather the Irish, comedy of the time.

For the figures of Marivaux are not only unsentimental; they are as cold as ice. Everything really turns on money; and the word *love*, which is thrown about freely, is a mere counter; Heaven knows what it means to such people. And the interest is purely intellectual; every word tells, not a thrust is wasted, and the subtlety of the feints and ripostes is surprising. A longer extract than usual may be allowed, to show the difference between Goldsmith and his creditor. The adroit Hortense is trying to bring the marquis to the point:

Je me flattais que vous seriez le premier à rompre le silence. Il est humiliant pour moi d'être obligé de vous prévenir. Avez-vous oublié qu'il y a un testament qui nous regarde?

Le Marquis. Oh! oui, je me souviens du testament.

Hortense. Et qui dispose de ma main en votre faveur?

Le Marquis. Oui, madame, oui; il faut que je vous épouse, cela est vrai.

Hortense. Eh bien, monsieur, à quoi vous déterminez-vous? Il est temps de fixer mon état. . . . Ma main est à vous, si vous la demandez.

Le Marquis. Vous me faites bien de la grâce; je la prends, mademoiselle.

Hortense. Est-ce votre cœur qui me choisit, monsieur le marquis?

Le Marquis. N'êtes-vous pas assez aimable pour cela?

Hortense. Et vous m'aimez?

Le Marquis. Qui est-ce qui vous dit le contraire? Tout à l'heure j'en parlais à madame.

La Comtesse. Il est vrai, c'était de vous qu'il m'entretenait; il songeait à vous proposer ce mariage.

Hortense. Et il vous disait qu'il m'aimait?

La Comtesse. Il me semble que oui; du moins me parlait-il de penchant.

Hortense. D'où vient donc, monsieur le marquis, me l'avez-vous laissé ignorer depuis six semaines?

The humour of all this is not exactly gay; it sharpens rather than cheers the mind; and the two Croakers, father and son, though they too are discussing money, talk in another key:

Croaker. She has her choice—to marry you, or lose half her fortune; and you have your choice—to marry her, or pack out of doors without any fortune at all.

Leontine. An only son, sir, might expect more indulgence.

Croaker. An only father, sir, might expect more obedience.

In the end Croaker, who is amiable at bottom, relents; and the whole piece is full of friendliness and gaiety, without effusion and without hardness.

XX

In *She Stoops to Conquer, or, the Mistakes of a Night*, the advance in craft is unmistakable. The play is ever young, and laughs at critics. Now and then the voice of the author, in his preaching moods, is heard. Miss Neville states that she has been 'obliged to stoop to dissimulation to avoid oppression.' But the heavy phrases of Mr. Hardcastle are all in character; 'modesty,' he says to his daughter, 'seldom resides in a breast that is not enriched with nobler virtues.' There are no caricatures. Lumpkin, whom Shakespeare would have applauded, is the most real personage in our eighteenth-century drama. He is a born actor; his mock courtship of Miss Neville is impeccable. Also it deftly introduces the portrait of the lady herself with her 'hazel eyes and her pretty long fingers.' And we see the 'two eyes black as sloes, and cheeks as broad and red as a pulpit-cushion,' of another lady, Bet Bouncer, who is not in the play, and whom Tony Lumpkin may or may not marry when it is over. The actress of Miss Hardcastle has three parts to sustain. She is one person to her friends, another to Marlow, and yet another to the waiting-maid. In the 'sober sentimental interview' she talks something like the kind of sentiment that Goldsmith is deriding. It is really a literary parody, with the familiar ceremonious turns and edifying sentences; and Marlow in sheer fright adopts the style. All this is a setting for the louder and broader scenes which have ever tempted actors of any, or of no, experience. Mrs. Hardcastle is one of the last of the town dames who are wearied to death in the country and who figure so often in contemporary satire. But her daughter embodies the cleanness and gaiety of fancy which quicken the whole play.

XXI

It is time to speak of Goldsmith's less-known writings. Midway between his original works and his popular decoctions come the four memoirs of Voltaire, Beau Nash, Bolingbroke, and Parnell. The first, a cobbled-up production, is much occupied with Voltaire's real or legendary amours, and ends with the poet's instalment at the court of Berlin. He was to outlive Goldsmith by four years; and as an 'estimate' the work is, naturally, ludicrous, though it was for some time the chief source of information for the English public. Goldsmith, it should be said, was the first to intimate the importance of

Voltaire's visit to England. The *Life* of Bolingbroke is more careful, containing extracts from letters and speeches; but it is, on the whole, a eulogy that gives no real picture. In the short but sympathetic account of Parnell, which contains some original letters, Goldsmith is free to indulge his own tastes and aversions in poetry. Parnell, like himself, had tried to humanise the spirit of an age of satire; and, we hear,

> he has considered the language of poetry as the language of life, and conveys the warmest thoughts in the simplest expression.

Not so the 'misguided innovators' who

> have not been content with restoring antiquated words and phrases, but have indulged themselves in the most licentious transpositions and the harshest constructions, vainly imagining that the more their writings are unlike prose, the more they resemble poetry.

Goldsmith the critic, as so often, is burning his boats. The offenders doubtless include the followers of Milton and Spenser, and the school of Gray. In the account of Parnell's end there is one stroke by which the authorship of the *Life*, if it were not known, might well be detected. The poet, after the loss of his wife, had sought from wine, 'if not relief, at least insensibility'; and himself, therefore, died 'in some measure a martyr to conjugal fidelity.'

The memoir of Nash is one of Goldsmith's smaller triumphs. He made personal inquiries, and is accepted as one of the 'authorities' on the subject. The life of the 'king of Bath' was one long anecdote, and in anecdotes Goldsmith excelled. Some are told at length, like the admirable tale of 'Colonel M.' and the lady whom he pursued. 'Like other kings,' we read, Nash had his 'mistresses, flatterers, enemies, and calumniators'; and they receive justice. His sumptuary laws on dress and behaviour are textually given; and a clear picture rises before us of the open-handed, improvident, despotic ruler of the fair, and of how he came down in the world while the fair went on without him. Nash is not glorified: 'he had some wit . . . but it was of that sort which is rather happy than permanent.' Goldsmith abstains from hawking the moral.

XXII

In point of avoirdupois and volume of print, his second-hand works exceed his other writings. Seldom reissued or quoted now, they well deserve a generous anthology. Many of them

were put together during his best years, when he had full command of his style and when his shaping instinct was at its height. The line is hard to draw in such cases between translating, adapting, and compiling; and Goldsmith liked the word 'abridgment,' which covers sundry operations. Everywhere he shows himself a *chef*; in the art of dexterously boiling down and elegantly serving up he has not been surpassed. His first venture was his translation (1758) of Jean Marteilhe's [1] *Memoirs of a Protestant*. It is a free, sometimes shortened version, lightly embroidered, and reads like an original. Marteilhe's work had appeared in the previous year, and he died long afterwards in London. A Protestant who refused to abjure his faith, he had tried in vain to escape from France, had served in the galleys, and had seen much naval fighting. He relates the horrors of his slavery with clear precision. Goldsmith in his preface vents his indignation against Louis the persecutor. But he is equally disgusted with the Methodists, the 'partisans of cant and familiarity'; and he distinguishes Marteilhe from 'our enthusiasts, who attach formal phrases and disgusting ejaculations to their ideas of religion.' Goldsmith's own ideal is seen in the parson of the *Deserted Village*; but his heart also warms to the afflicted Huguenot.

His histories of Rome, Greece, and England are avowedly catering, and are not to be judged by the canons of science. They are designed for the widest possible public; for persons, that is, 'who think a moderate share of history sufficient for the purposes of life.' Goldsmith is satisfied to give them

> a plain unaffected narrative of facts, with just sufficient ornament to keep the attention awake, and with reflection barely sufficient to set the reader upon thinking. Very moderate abilities were equal to such an undertaking.

The undertaking had 'hitherto fallen to the lot of very dull men,' who had been much too long or else unreadable. Thus prepared, we need not spurn the fare that Goldsmith provides, or expect too much from it. The *History of England* (1771), like its shorter precursor, *An History of England in a Series of Letters from a Nobleman to his Son* (1764), has probably fixed the figures of Rufus, and Becket, and Charles the First in more youthful minds than any other book. Goldsmith, a born narrator, takes his facts as he finds them in his Rapin, his Carte, and other 'sources.' He describes the historic tragedies with special gusto; and his silvery style bears him, as usual, over obstacles. It is disarming to be told about the early Britons that 'the

variety of opinions upon this head serve [*sic*] to show the futility of all.' We do not call Goldsmith a historian; but he has not, like some learned men who try to simplify for children and the laity, the air of expecting too little from our intelligence. The same qualities are found in the *Roman History* (1769), which boldly spans the centuries 'from the foundation of the city to the destruction of the Western Empire,' and in the *Grecian History* (1774), from the beginnings to the death of Alexander. One of Goldsmith's longest introductions, written with unusual care and lack of vivacity, is to a history, which has not been identified, of the Seven Years' War. The custom of making prefaces to other men's books seems to have taken root during this period, and was, as we know, one of Johnson's regular industries. Goldsmith, in 1763, wrote a lengthy prelude to the *Natural History* of Richard Brookes. His discourse on beasts, birds, fishes, insects, and plants has all his charm, elegance, and inventiveness; and it is a rehearsal for a greater undertaking of his own, which merits longer comment.

XXIII

This was *An History of the Earth and Animated Nature*,[1] which occupied him at intervals during his last five years, was published in 1774 in eight volumes, and ran through many an edition after he had gone. Nothing better shows Goldsmith's power of making information, or what professes to be information, pleasant. He moulds into literature masses of intractable material. It was but half in jest that he said, according to the familiar tale, that he scarce knew a goose from a swan. There is also Boswell's report of having seen, in the house at Edgware to which Goldsmith retired for work, 'scraps of descriptions of animals scrawled upon the wall with a blacklead pencil.' And we have the witness of a fellow-countryman whom he employed to compile and abridge from his chief authority, the *Histoire Naturelle* of Buffon. But Goldsmith's literary sources have been lately examined, and, whatever his personal knowledge of the subject, they are much ampler than might be supposed. He knew many of the standard authorities; he used, amongst others, Ray and Willoughby, Swammerdam and Réaumur; and his methods, which horrify the scientific mind, are a continual entertainment. He arrays and owns these authorities, placing his own contribution solemnly in quotation-marks—when he remembers to do so. He often borrows their footnotes without any such formality. When, avowedly or not, he is

translating, he cuts down, expands, or decorates as may seem good. He has the sense of what editors call 'copy' in the highest degree; and his confessed aim is not exact knowledge, but 'instructive amusement.' He has an almost perfect sense of scale and arrangement. The first volume is taken up with the 'history of the earth,' a kind of popular physical geography, adorned with a portentous picture of a volcano in full blast. Then comes an account of the growth, at different ages, of man and the animals, with agreeable interludes (borrowed) on 'monsters' and on 'mummies and waxworks.' Quadrupeds follow, and birds, and fish, and reptiles, sorted under their 'kinds,' and accompanied with many plates, often comically bad, and adapted from the books before him. Insects, worms, polyps, and the like, complete the show. Many a child has had his image of the lion, the ape, the bison, and the dodo imprinted by Goldsmith, who encouraged his draughtsmen to give them impossibly human expressions.

The spirit of the work is shown in the opening sentence:

> The world may be considered as one vast mansion, where man has been admitted to enjoy, to admire, and to be grateful.

Providence, in fact, has designed 'animated nature' as an edifying spectacle for ourselves; and, working as it does through 'second causes,' leaves us in a state of wonder never unmixed with respectful amusement. Nor does Goldsmith fail to make his own contribution to the story. It has been well said that he had 'a profound though sometimes almost ludicrous sympathy with animals.' He talked to travellers and sailors, and quotes them as good authorities; and he went and watched the beasts in the Tower. He had seen the shepherds in the Alps piping their flocks homewards; and we linger the more over *Animated Nature*, in the hope of lighting on some grave observation by the author himself. One of these I must quote at length, to show his curious simple-minded subtlety. It occurs in the section upon the Toad:

> The imagination, in this matter, biassed by its terrors, paints out the toad in the most hideous colouring, and clothes it in more than natural deformity. Its bódy is broád; its báck flát; cóvered with a dúsky, pímpled híde; its bélly is lárge and swágging; the páce láboured and cráwling; its retreát gloómy and fílthy; and its whóle appeárance cálculàted to excíte disgúst and hórror.
>
> Yet, upon my first seeing a toad, none of all these deformities in the least affected me with sensations of loathing: born, as I was, in a country where there are no toads, I had prepared my imagination for some dreadful object: but there seemed nothing to me more

alarming in the sight than in that of a common frog; and, indeed, for some time I mistook and handled the one for the other. When first informed of my mistake, I very well remember my sensations; I wondered how I had escaped with safety after handling and dissecting a toad which I had mistaken for a frog. I then began to lay in a fund of horror against the whole tribe, which, though convinced they are harmless, I shall never get rid of. My first imaginations were too strong, not only for my reason, but for the conviction of my senses.

This tells us more about Goldsmith than about the toad. Luckily there was something of the boy in him, which never quite grew up and which speaks to us all; or, we may say, he is like Adam admiring the creation, not too critically. We are never sure that he is not amused at himself, or at his readers. *Animated Nature*, in point of style, is well worthy of Goldsmith; and his nice instinct for rhythm, which prompts many of his verbal changes as a translator, is well seen in the above quotation. We can scan with satisfaction the sentences on the toad's personal appearance—three short clauses ending on a heavy syllable, then three, successively longer, ending on a light one, and then a swelling climax.

XXIV

A few of Goldsmith's special obligations[1] to French writers have been described. Many more have been found by scholars, but a recital would overload this page. His general debt is less easy to define. The musical and friendly lines in the *Traveller* show his natural affinity with the lighter moods of the country folk. His tone is not that of the travelling Briton of the day: the snarls of Smollett and the subtleties of Sterne are equally alien to him. But he brought this cheery temper with him, and did not owe it to France. His sympathy with the mind of other races was quick rather than deep-seated. He turned over the pages of Voltaire and Montesquieu, but did not carry away many ideas in the process. His instinct, however, for style and literary structure must have been quickened. Voltaire warns every one not to be turgid, heavy, or obscure. Marivaux is a model of concision and finesse. Buffon fulfils the precepts of his own *Discours sur le Style*. Even a plain tale like that of Jean Marteilhe is well told. Goldsmith, in his original as well as in his second-hand writings, learnt from France some of his skill in shaping, proportioning, and omitting; and also, it is fair to say, some of his ease, transparency, and lightness of hand.

These qualities were inborn ; and no doubt he was sealed from the first of the tribe of Addison and hardly needed a foreign schooling. He escapes the charge, made against Hume and Chesterfield, of gallicising his English. Still, when he wrote, the latinising style adopted by Johnson and other friends was contesting the field with the tradition of Addison. Goldsmith can use the formal period, and use it well, when he is minded to be solemn, or when he is influenced by the moralists. But it is the habitual contrast of his manner with that of the *Rambler*, or of the *History of Charles the Fifth*, that makes him a kind of contemporary with ourselves, while the others, gifted as they are, speak in a voice of the past. Thus he is a master of that central, dateless, and in the true sense *classical* style, the ideal of which is common to France and England.

CHAPTER V

JOHNSON AND BOSWELL

I

Most foreigners seem to requite Johnson's [1] coldness and to regard him as one of our insular superstitions ; few of them take him to their hearts. Except for *Rasselas*, which was translated into many tongues, he was little known abroad in his own day. He invented no forms, no *Spectators* or *Robinsonaden*, which produced a progeny of emigrants. Unlike Thomson, Richardson, Hume, Sterne, and Gibbon, he hardly affected French or German literature. Another reason lay in his intellectual temper and limitations. His rigid code, political and ecclesiastical, walls him in. His mind, indeed, works with wonderful freedom and acuteness within it ; and he often surprises us by looking over the walls. Still, to open a page of Lessing or Diderot is to be in another world of ideas ; and Johnson was not touched by, and could not influence, the forward-looking thought of the time. What he knew of it he did not like. Nor did he like the new poetry, though he made some remarkable concessions to it. Yet he judged the poets of his own school and lineage with independence, and said profound things about Shakespeare and Milton. His mistakes and protests are of more interest than the admiring conformities of other men. He is a truly great critic in his own line, and if other nations did not much attend to him the loss was theirs. Nor can he be called ' insular ' ; for all the English-speaking races, including the Scots, are devoted to him. To them he is better known as a man than any other author. As an author he will always be less known ; yet his books, at first extolled, and then found to be tedious, have now regained some of their former position. Scholars have never ignored them, and in literary history they are safe enough.

The life of Samuel Johnson (1709-1784) as a writer falls into four periods, each lasting about twelve years.

1. 1735-1748. During this time of struggle and hackwork he learned his craft, practising almost all the kinds of writing in which he was afterwards to excel. We can watch the formation

of his style and of his view of life. He made verses, Latin and English, which include *London* (1738); also a series of brief biographies of Blake, Drake, Sydenham, and others. A longer one, the *Life of Savage* (1744), begins to show the stamp and resource of Johnson's prose. During this period he earned much of his bread by contributions to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, founded in 1731 by Edward Cave. They are many and miscellaneous, though the authorship is often uncertain; they begin in 1738; and Johnson became, it may be said, the directing brain of the venture. For Cave he put together from notes furnished, and he also very largely invented, the parliamentary reports entitled *Debates in the Senate of Lilliput* (1738-1744): remarkable *pastiches*, which helped to mould his own more formal style. This, indeed, had been audible in his earliest published work, a translation (1735) from Jerome Lobo's *Voyage to Abyssinia*. In 1747 he issued his *Plan*, addressed to Chesterfield, for the *Dictionary*.

2. 1748-1760. This, Johnson's sternest task and the foundation of his fame,[1] took him eight years to complete. *A Dictionary of the English Language* appeared in 1755; and the *Preface*, with its force and grasp, its gloom and rigour, gives the key to his mood during these years. They include his greatest and most fertile period, although no one of its productions can rank with the *Lives of the Poets*. He wrote more little biographies, including one of Sir Thomas Browne; poured out reviews in the *Literary Magazine* and elsewhere; threw off many prefaces and dedications to the books of other persons. But he figures above all as the gallant melancholy moralist who delivers his soul both in verse and prose. He begins, in 1748, with the *Vision of Theodore*; next year comes the *Vanity of Human Wishes*, his second adaptation from Juvenal. The poem is still alive, unlike the tragedy of *Irene* (1749) He then opened a steady cannonade of essays; the *Rambler* (1750-2) contains more than two hundred. Next, while oppressed by the loss of his wife, he wrote over twenty more in Hawkesworth's *Adventurer*; and afterwards (1758-60), mostly in lighter and freer vein, some ninety others in the *Idler*. Meantime, while he was again overshadowed, this time by the death of his mother, came *The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abissinia, a Tale* (1759); a work that contains Johnson's deliberate judgment, at the time, upon the value of all that life can offer.

3. 1760-1772. He was now to be less burdened. In 1762 he accepted the pension from Lord Bute, on independent terms; and in the next year he encountered Boswell. We begin, there-

fore, to know him better as a man. He has earned the right to be an *idler*, and prints less than before; but his mind works all the time with the swift activity of a piston. He talks, and his talk is taken down, to be durably recorded. In 1764 he founded, in company with Reynolds, the 'Club' which after 1779 was to be known as the 'Literary Club.' Johnson is, after all, the author of his own conversation, and therefore part-author of Boswell's chronicle; a point to be remembered when we are told that he is 'greater than his works.' Meanwhile, after long delays, for which Churchill taunted him in the *Ghost*, he published in 1765 the *Plays of William Shakespeare*, with preface and notes, thus making good the *Proposals* issued nine years before. Is it fanciful to think that after his reading of Shakespeare, Johnson's vision of the human lot became less rigid and one-sided? In that faithful mirror life is not simply a series, as it is in *Rasselas*, of frustrations and disheartening events; it is neither tragedy nor comedy for very long, but the two interwoven. In any case, the *Preface* to the *Shakespeare* is a great boundary-mark in English criticism, and shows Johnson's powers at their fullest stretch.

4. 1772-1784. He now became more active with the pen, partly owing to a political impulse. To the years 1770-5 belong the tracts called the *False Alarm*, *Thoughts* on the question of the Falkland Islands, the *Patriot*, and *Taxation No Tyranny*. In 1773 he went with Boswell to the North, and two years later published his *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*. The richest fruit of his taste and experience was the last: the *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets, with Critical Observations on their Works* (1779-81); and his forces were not abated when he died at the age of seventy-five. Johnson, like Goldsmith, cannot be labelled, except as a man of letters. He made poems, essays, tales, reviews, lives, miscellanies, and criticisms; he was a master-craftsman, a carpenter with adze, plane, and chisel, or, if we like, a worker in iron; he was prepared to *make* almost anything. His natural instrument is prose; but his verses can never be despised.

II

What he said of certain lines by Richard Bentley the elder, 'which he recited,' says Boswell, 'with his usual energy,' is often true of his own poetry:

Dr. Adam Smith, who was present, observed in his decisive professorial manner, 'Very well—very well.' Johnson however added,

'Yes, they *are* very well, Sir; but you may observe in what manner they are well. They are the forcible verses of a man of strong mind, who is not accustomed to write verse; for there is some uncouthness in the expression.'

In most of Johnson's verse the shaping influence is Latin. He adapted from Latin, he wrote Latin; his English constantly has the Latin stamp, and he always seems to be mentally retranslating into Latin. He was very familiar not only with the ancient poets but with the neo-Latin verse [1] of the Renaissance. He is perhaps most himself when he is manipulating a classic. He follows Juvenal, or quits him, as may suit his plan. He never strays from him too far; but his own chagrin intensifies the sternness of the original. *Slow rises worth.* The old form of the 'imitation,' or 'allusion,' which Pope, as it might seem, was now carrying to its furthest point of perfection, received a new lease of life from Johnson. Pope noticed *London*, and his own dialogue, *1738*, came out in the same year; he foretold that Johnson would soon be 'unearthed' (*déterré*). In *London* there is a deeper note than Pope's, if not the same nicety of finish; and there is an impetus, which can scarcely have been learned except from Dryden. The manlier style and nobler cadence of the greater satirist can be heard throughout. And Johnson is nearer in spirit to Juvenal than Pope is to Horace. Like both the Roman poets, and unlike Pope, he is wholly sincere. Yet he is still only twenty-eight, a young man who is very angry but who is nevertheless amused. He delights in Juvenal's ruthlessness, and a little, too, in his ugliness. There is a spring and lightness in some of the lines which we miss in the funereal *Vanity of Human Wishes*: no doubt it is rather grim entertainment:

> Prepare for death if here at night you roam,
> And sign your will before you sup from home.
> Some fiery fop, with new commission vain,
> Who sleeps on brambles till he kills his man;
> Some frolic drunkard, reeling from a feast,
> Provokes a broil, and stabs you for a jest.

Eleven years later, and even this touch of ease has departed; in its place there is a swell of passion like the noise of a furnace:

> But few there are whom hours like these await,
> Who set unclouded in the gulfs of fate. . . .
>
> Yet hope not life from pain or danger free,
> Nor think the doom of man reversed for thee.

The pattern of the *Vanity of Human Wishes*, Juvenal's tenth satire, furnishes a higher and harsher mood, a wider and stronger

vision of the world, than obtained in *London*; but the general method is the same, except that the 'imitation' is now laxer than before. Sejanus is adroitly transformed into Wolsey and Hannibal into Charles the Twelfth. The effect is more monotonous than in the original. The lively concrete touches, the 'jugs and frying-pans,' and the 'pounds of flesh' (*quot libras in duce summo?*) disappear, probably in deference to Johnson's idea that abstractions are essential to poetic dignity. 'Great thoughts,' he said, 'are always general.' No stronger lines have ever been written in the heroic couplet than the conclusion of this poem. Even the religious consolation is more sombre than Juvenal's pagan complaint. The *Vanity of Human Wishes* reveals a metrical and musical sense, a mastery of slow rhythm and of open sounds ('Roll darkling down the torrent of his fate'), that suggest a long preparation. Yet it was written, says Boswell, with a 'fervid rapidity'; 'he composed seventy lines of it in one day.' *Irene*, though undramatic and didactic, is of interest for its versification. The blank lines, as critics have noted, call out for rhyme; but they also show Johnson's early acquaintance with the school of John Fletcher. They are usually isolated, and are very often of eleven syllables; hence the peculiar dragging effect. Johnson had finished the piece in 1737, twelve years before Garrick played it at Drury Lane.

His theatrical prologues, if not so perfectly finished, show the same skill. The lines on the opening of Drury Lane theatre (1747) contain sound dramatic history, and those written for the 'benefit' of Milton's granddaughter, 'spoken by Mr. Garrick before the masque of *Comus*,' are admirable pleading. Of the other English poems, the best known and the most heartfelt, the epitaph on Robert Levett, 'officious, innocent, sincere,' has something of a Latin cast, and seems to be hammered out with pain and effort; the antitheses, in these short lines, have little elbow-room. Johnson, in his saurian way, also trifled in rhyme, turning out little gallantries,[1] and also his sally in banter of his friend Thomas Warton and of the new poetry of 'ode, and elegy, and sonnet.' Like some other pieces, his *Ad Skiam*, written in the Highlands and captured by Boswell, suggest that he was not so insensible to scenery [2] as might be supposed. Lighter lines, to 'Thralia dulcis,' were written at Corrichatachin in 'his chamber,' while Boswell, down below among the Highlanders, 'presumed to mingle in their mirth.' But Johnson, like Gray, was fond of using the learned language for his deeper feelings. May we not think of these two ardent humanists meeting in the shades, burying their antipathy, and

conversing in the speech of Horace ? Johnson would soften to the elegy on West in Gray's *De Principiis Cogitandi* ; and Gray would understand the complaint penned after the revision of the *Dictionary* :

> Me, pensi immunis dum jam mihi reddor, inertis
> Desidiae sors dura manet, graviorque labore
> Tristis et atra quies, et tardae taedia vitae.

III

Patience, and dip into the *Ramblers* ! All but a few are by Johnson, who turned them out during two years at the rate of about two a week. Two generations fed upon them eagerly ; the sixteenth edition is dated 1810. At first they seem, and often they are, pompous and obvious. We tire of Eastern fables, of parables where the actors are Labour, Lassitude, Satiety, and Rest, and even of discourses on the predominance of pain over pleasure in human life. Yet there is generally something to hold the mind : a turn given to a commonplace, that reveals the bitterness of the speaker ; or a flash of insight into town and country life. All this is disguised by the first grey look of the page. Johnson often drops from the abstract and sententious into the plain idiom of his best talk. Elsewhere he distinguishes ' three forms of style,' namely, ' the *familiar*, the *solemn*, and the *pathetic* ' ; and his method is to relieve the solemn by the familiar. When the apologue or the imaginary letter turns heavy in the baking, he turns to the comedy of humours. The comedy is not always intentional. He works hard to make a young lady or gentleman talk, *not* like himself, in words of one syllable ; and we observe the Roman hand, trying to be *missish*, when Euphelia descants on the monotony of country life :

> I go out and return, I pluck a flower, and throw it away ; I catch an insect, and when I have examined its colours set it at liberty ; I fling a pebble into the water, and see one circle spread after another. When it chances to rain, I walk in the great hall, and watch the minute-hand upon the dial, or play with a litter of kittens, which the cat happens to have brought in a lucky time.

We remember the writer's own pastimes, in the year 1777, at Ashbourne, in Dr. Taylor's garden, when he told Boswell to push the dead cat ' over the cascade ' into the Henmoor brook : ' a small characteristic trait in the Flemish picture which I give of my friend.'

The *Ramblers* are easiest to read when they descend to

minute particulars. One number, on the 'revolutions of a garret,' describes the experiences of a landlady, and is like a scrap of Fielding. There was a puzzling 'elderly man of a grave aspect,' who, though otherwise 'cool and temperate,' was always stormy till he received his change for the bill, and who never paid in 'small money.' For he was a coiner; but he escaped from the police over the roof,

> much to the joy of my landlady; who declares him a very honest man, and wonders why any one should be hanged for making money when such numbers are in want of it.

The next inmate was an author, who talked Greek to himself, 'sometimes threw down his poker, then clattered his chairs,' and paid his way punctually, but at last had to go for setting fire to his curtains. Indeed, authors and their sufferings, which are due to poverty, to baffled vanity, or to the insolence of luckier men, figure much in the *Ramblers*. Other types are the fop, the tradesman who apes the gentleman, and the 'virtuoso,' or collector of useless trifles—'the longest blade of grass upon record,' or 'a fur cap of the Tsar, and a boot of Charles of Sweden.' A few of the pictures have a touch of Hogarth, but are more compassionate in tone. Misella, the girl who goes downhill, is drawn without false sentiment and without hardness, although she is sometimes made to speak like Johnson. But the comedy of humours rules, and some of the traits are sharp. There is the inquiring Nugaculus, who knows all about everybody; who, 'to obtain all this intelligence, is inadvertently guilty of a thousand acts of treachery'; and who is 'not ill-natured,' but is 'every day more hated as he is more known': a perfect sketch of the man we have all met, who does not know how disloyal he is.

The Latin mottoes prefixed to the *Ramblers* are real texts and often seem to have suggested the topic. The authors quoted range from Horace, Juvenal, and Martial to Prudentius. Worn pebble-smooth by time, these 'middle axioms,' as Bacon calls them –something between high philosophic truths and notes of detail—exactly suit Johnson's talent. They set him thinking how he shall coin them into prose for our instruction. *Quod petis, hic est;—Nihil est quod credere de se Non possit; –O imitatores, servum pecus!* The supply never fails; and Johnson's application of them is his own. The *imitatores*, for instance, become the contemporary followers of Spenser, a poet whose 'difficult and unpleasing' stanza prompts the reflection that

life is surely given us for higher purposes than to gather what our ancestors have wisely thrown away, and to learn what is of no value, but because it has been forgotten.

This is as stimulating, in its opposite way, as Keats's line on the 'Spenserian vowels that elope with ease.'

We can hardly count Johnson among the greater masters of wisdom; it would be unfair to contrast him with Montaigne or Goethe; but his conversance with life and suffering, and his sense of humour, often carry him beyond his code. No ordinary moraliser would have praised Benvenuto Cellini, whose 'characters,' he says, 'are touched with the hand of a master.' But he tells us himself that his aim is not to be original; he is a lay preacher, whose ideal is not the sermon but the aphorism: and

> the excellence of aphorisms consists not so much in the expression of some rare or abstruse sentiment, as in the comprehension of some obvious and useful truth in a few words. . . . He may therefore be justly numbered among the benefactors of mankind, who contracts the great rules of life into short sentences, that may be easily impressed on the memory.

That is, who can make himself into an English Seneca or Horace. The sentence throws light on the qualities in Johnson's prose which 'impress it on the memory,' his exactness and concision. Like Flaubert, he knew the misery of the artist who hunts for the right and only word, which, he is sure, has a phantom existence—where?

> It is one of the common distresses of a writer, to be within a single word of a happy period, to want only a single epithet to give amplification its full force, to require only a correspondent term in order to finish a paragraph with elegance, and make one of its members answer to another; but these deficiencies cannot always be supplied; and after long study and vexation, the passage is turned anew, and the web unwoven that was so nearly finished.

The antithetical habit is seen in all that Johnson wrote, but more especially from 1750 to 1765. It is quite as much the compression of his thought, and his resolve to make 'one of the members' of the sentence 'answer to the other,' as any long words or pedantry of phrase, that captured his own age, and that wearies ours. A last quotation, in his most balanced style, will show how the task wearied himself, and how the heavy-laden mood in which the *Ramblers* were written penetrates their rhythm:

> He that condemns himself to compose on a stated day, will often bring to his task an attention dissipated, a memory embarrassed, an

imagination overwhelmed, a mind distracted by anxieties, a body languishing with disease. He will labour on a barren topic, till it is too late to change it; or, in the ardour of invention, diffuse his thoughts into wild exuberance, which the pressing hour of publication cannot suffer judgment to examine or reduce.

In the *Idlers*, written seven years later, there are somewhat fewer *sentences*, or moral texts; but the frustration of pleasure, the shortness of fame, and the lapse of friendship, are still mournfully recorded. In one written just after his mother's death, Johnson cries, *Where is the bottom of the misery of man? . . . The life which made my own life pleasant is at an end.* But this strain is rare; and usually he strives to be light, and, strange to say, he sometimes succeeds. He does not fear to vie with Addison in drawing Characters, who often tell their own story; and these papers are like the rough notes of a novelist. Dick Minim the critic, the best known of his personages, is a purveyor of literary commonplaces, which are often false; and No. 60 is a curious museum of such things, significant in its date (1759):

> Denham and Waller he held the first reformers of English numbers; and thought that if Waller could have obtained the strength of Denham, or Denham the sweetness of Waller, there had been nothing wanting to complete a poet.

Betty Broom, the maid who wanders from mistress to mistress; the 'good sort of woman,' who never forgets a slight, but 'takes all opportunities to tell how easily she can forgive'; and, better still, Molly Quick's mistress, who talks and rebukes by hints and allusions only, are figures in the same gallery. Johnson's knowledge of the citizen's wife, or landlady, was wide and painful, and was won at first-hand. The *Dictionary* is still in his mind; and much is said about the rich resources of our language, and the lawfulness of using hard words in their due place; and there is a curious number on 'easy poetry,' of which the 'prerogative' is 'to be understood as long as the language lasts'; a species which Johnson at times essayed himself, but which he perhaps praises the more, as he does the 'middle style' of Addison, because it is out of his reach. One essay is on the art of portraiture, which Johnson touches on its human side; the work of Reynolds, he says, is 'quickening the affections of the absent, and *continuing the presence of the dead*'; and he would grieve to see him 'transfer' his skill to 'heroes and goddesses, to empty splendour and to airy fiction.' The *Idler* contains three papers by Reynolds himself, of which one (No. 82) is his reasoned plea for typical or 'general forms' in painting—

a plea quite in the spirit of Imlac. Also there are three cheerful and lively ones by Thomas Warton, who opens not with a Johnsonian generality, but with the words, 'Sam Softly was bred a sugar-baker.'

IV

Bishop Percy, says Boswell, 'heard Dr. Johnson say, that he thought this was the best thing he ever wrote.' The allusion is to *The Vision of Theodore, the Hermit of Teneriffe, Found in his Cell* (1748). Certainly this fable has more imagination and high-poetic cadence than anything else in Johnson's prose. 'A beautiful allegory of human life,' adds Boswell, 'under the figure of ascending the Mountain of Existence.' It is like some pageant of moral abstractions in Spenser, only with the grace and colour almost stript away, and logic put in their place. The contrast between two ages of literature could hardly be better pointed. The travellers begin in the flowery valleys, with a guide :

when, as it often happened, they plucked a thistle for a flower, Innocence, so she was called, would smile at the mistake.

Soon they are let and hindered by many pygmies, who are the Habits that chain us by means of Appetite and Passion ; and, it is acutely said, 'the path of Reason was best followed, when a Passion called to one side, and an Appetite to the other.' Later on,

as they advanced, the flowers grew paler, and the scents fainter; they proceeded in their dreary march without pleasure in their progress, yet without power to return ; and had this aggravation above all others, that they were criminal but not delighted.

The guide is Reason ; but only up to the point where the mists begin to gather ; and then Reason falls back, and Religion alone will serve. This prose has its own music ; and the machinery, if now obsolete, is far from commonplace. It is the strength of Johnson, that he always makes us feel the background of his own experience. We have many a prayer and resolution that he penned against his own slothfulness ; and we see that he was morbidly aware of the strength of the pygmies who harried Theodore.

The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abissinia,[1] expresses more intensely and reasons out more fully the mood that we find in the preface to the *Dictionary* and in many a *Rambler*. It was written under a recent grief, and it puts Johnson's case against our earthly lot with all his sincerity and power. But it does

not represent his final view; and at times he has the air of writing, as he talked, for victory; or rather, of trying to plumb his melancholy to the depths before he can come again to the surface. *Candide* appeared, quite independently, almost at the same time; but the target of Voltaire is the optimism of Leibniz or Shaftesbury, while Johnson chiefly attacks that of the fortunate and unthinking. And although his aim, contrary to that of Voltaire, may have been religious—'to direct,' in Boswell's words, 'the hopes of man to things eternal,' yet his scheme, with its mythical setting (for Abyssinia is really nowhere), forbids him to be thus explicit. And the consolations of his 'sage' are in fact purely pagan and stoical; they are at best the vague 'hope to possess in a better state that happiness which here I could not find.' *Rasselas* would have been quite intelligible to Cicero. The strength of Johnson's handiwork can be seen, if we try to read John Hawkesworth's *Almoran and Hamet* (1761), another of the exotic stories[1] then in fashion, with its flat moral and stupid magic.

Rasselas ran through many editions in the eighteenth century, and has found its way into Asiatic as well as European tongues. The Oriental loves these moral sentences, with a dash of platitude, and he has more time for them than we have. The 'tale' is no tale at all, but an imaginary colloquy between a party of Dr. Johnsons; and the style is of his most rhetorical stamp. But we follow with pleasure the strict thinking of a powerful, unhopeful mind; and, on looking closer, we see shades and varieties in its idiom. The language is not all so formal, and the irony is often most effective. It is curious to find a point of contact here between Johnson and Fielding. The philosopher who disappointed Rasselas talks very much like Mr. Square: 'let us carry with us this simple and intelligible maxim, that deviation from nature is deviation from happiness.' And he is made to speak absurdly, but in very plain English, which is not polysyllabic at all:

> 'This,' said a philosopher, who had heard him with tokens of impatience, 'is the present condition of a wise man. The time is already come, when none are wretched, but by their own fault. Nothing is more idle, than to inquire after happiness, which nature has kindly placed within our reach. The way to be happy is to live according to nature. . . .'

Johnson grinds this illusion to dust, and states his own firmly held theory that the miseries of life exceed its pleasures. But he is no pessimist; and to see how little such a view exhausts

his philosophy, we have only to remember his immense and cordial power of enjoyment, and also to glance at Swift, whose gloom is fundamental, and whose vision of human futility is far wider than Johnson's.

The little fairy tale called *The Fountains* (1766) is, for Johnson, lightsome in spirit and simple in language ; the teaching is that of *Rasselas*, but in a gentler form. Floretta is allowed by the grateful sprite Lilinet to drink of the alabaster fountain of joy, a kind of wishing well ; and she wishes in turn for beauty, for a faithful lover, for length of life, and for wit. But all are disappointments, and she drinks of the bitter flinty fountain of sorrow in order to recover. At last Lilinet ' resigned her, as she resigned herself, to the course of nature '—the mixed common lot and the natural end. The story has a grace and prettiness that we hardly expect from the writer.

Johnson was a great journalist, from first to last ; and it is hard to describe his mass of miscellanies, many of them written for bread, some from sheer good-nature, and some for edification. He would do much for a brother or sister author : we have his prefaces or dedications to the *Female Quixote* of Mrs. Lennox, to a work on the game of draughts, to another on the use of the globes, and to another on ' new tables of interest.' He likes to begin with a general maxim, far back from the subject. ' That we are fallen upon an age in which corruption is barely not universal, is universally confessed ' : this formidable sentence introduces a now forgotten ' harmony ' of the Gospels. The preface to the *Preceptor* (1748) draws out a stiff and elaborate programme of education. Sometimes Johnson speaks of himself. His familiar confession that he is ' a hardened and shameless tea-drinker ' is found in his review of Jonas Hanway's *Eight Days Journey*. Another review (1757), of Soame Jenyns on the *Origin of Evil*, will be referred to hereafter (Ch. XVIII.). A glance at the bibliography will show Johnson's copiousness and versatility in these kinds of writing. It must be enough to allude to the little sheaf that he produced, in 1777, on behalf of Dr. William Dodd,[1] who was hanged for forgery ; it includes various petitions and articles, and also a sermon, preached by Dodd in Newgate, the *Convict's Address to his Unhappy Brethren*.

V

The chief intent of it is to preserve the purity, and ascertain the meaning, of our English idiom. . . . This, my lord, is my idea of an English Dictionary : a dictionary by which the pronunciation of our

language may be fixed, and its attainment facilitated; by which its purity may be preserved, its use ascertained, and its duration lengthened.

Such is the clear statement in the *Plan* addressed to Chesterfield; and when the task was done, Johnson's admirers could claim, as Boswell puts it in his *Account of Corsica*, that he had 'alone executed in England what was the task of whole academies in other countries.' The *Preface*, that majestic piece of prose which reveals the pride, the exhaustion, and the relief of the writer (and, indeed, as the work had proceeded, the *wheels drave heavily*), shows that he expected 'malignity to fasten' on the result. He certainly met with a few jeers at his polysyllabic definitions of some plain words like *net*; but this cavil he had parried in advance by remarking that 'the easiest word, whatever it be, can never be translated into one more easy.' Such objections soon died down; and other critics only stamped in the general memory some of the definitions (*excise*, *oatmeal*, *pension*) in which the lexicographer had relieved his feelings. The *Dictionary* stood fast. There was to be no organised effort in such a cause for a long time to come; and even when philology arose, and syndicates fell to work, the book remained among the assured foundations for later and larger fabrics. It is a Roman arch or aqueduct, built by one mind, and not wholly buried under a triumph of modern engineering. I write this (1928) while the completion of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, one of the glories of Johnson's university, is being celebrated. The range of literature from which Johnson, who began about the time of Sidney, drew his instances, has been lengthened backwards as well as forwards; his subdivisions of meaning have been multiplied beyond measure; and, above all, the purpose of the work has changed. The scholars of to-day undertake to describe the English language as it is and has been. Johnson wished to legislate, and to settle what is good English, and his verdicts were accepted. No one ever will again hold his position as an arbiter of our prose.

Nor is it likely that any successor will cherish, as Johnson at first had done, 'the dreams of a poet doomed at last to wake a lexicographer,' or hope to 'intersperse with verdure and flowers the dusty deserts of barren philology.' Johnson's original aim was a kind of cyclopedia which should promote the knowledge of things as well as of words. He made extracts to this end from philosophers, historians, 'chymists,' divines, and poets; but could only in the end find room for some 'beautiful descriptions' from the poets. These, in fact, abound, and Johnson's know-

ledge of the Elizabethans, and especially of their drama, is remarkable. His view of their language shows his usual insight. He sees that it was fluid and experimental and had become largely obsolete ; yet that from it a speech might be ' formed adequate to all the purposes of use and elegance ' ; and that by extracting this from the great authors, ' few ideas would be lost to mankind for want of English words, in which they might be expressed.' Again, though his purpose is to fix, so far as may be, a true and lasting standard, Johnson has a keen sense of the inevitable growth and change in a living tongue ; and if he deplores this fact, and speaks of ' acquiescing ' in it and ' palliating ' its effects by his endeavours, still his picture of the process goes far to refute his regrets. He notes the regular inflow of foreign words due to the growth of trade, and of learned words due to the growth of knowledge ; he points out how often ' the metaphorical will become the current sense ' ; how fashion and manners alter diction ; how, ' as any custom is disused, the words that expressed it must perish with it ' ; and how no dictator can keep some words from disappearing : for ' what makes a word obsolete, more than general agreement to forbear it ? ' All this hard sense had its reward. Johnson felt himself a kind of Canute who really could, for a time, order back the waves ; and so in fact he did. For generations the *Dictionary* was, as we know, a court of appeal, with some authority to ban, and still greater authority [1] to admit, any contested usage.

The methods, merits, and range of the *Dictionary* have been often explained, and always with most honourable mention, by those of Johnson's calling. Working on Nathan Bailey's collection (*Universal Etymological English Dictionary*, 1721), he had weeded out many special and technical terms, had enriched the store from his Elizabethan reading, and had not wholly slighted the very familiar, or the provincial speech ; but had set his face severely against gallicism. There are locutions in Hume, in Horace Walpole, and in Gibbon, which Johnson would have severely ruled out. He is always justly praised for his definitions and distinctions of meaning, which show great analytic power. Here he was well served by the legal side to his brain, which comes out in those opinions on law, Scots as well as English (*On Vicious Intromission*, *Lay-Patronage*, and the like), which he dictated with surprising speed and skill to Boswell. The same kind of gift is shown in his excursions into abstract philosophy and theology. He was little enough versed in these sciences, and yet his discourses on Sir Isaac Newton's view of

infinity, or on Soame Jenyns's theory of the nature of evil, show his zest for such reasonings. In all this work and indeed everywhere, in talk as in writing, Johnson was on his mettle to be correct, and to obey his own rules; so that every word he spoke, and not only those included in his lexicon, bore, as it were, the King's head. His little anthology, and historical sketch, of earlier English literature, prefixed to the *Dictionary*, is full of interest; and, together with the notes of Gray, is a measure of the state of learning in that province.

VI

Most of the biographies printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine* are brief compilations; and the lives of the physicians Boerhaave and Sydenham, and of the admirals Blake and Drake, are in that plainer style which in Johnson's middle life was overlaid by Latinism and to which he partially returned in his later maturity. The tales of battles by sea are told with energy, and Johnson, had he so chosen, could doubtless have qualified as a narrative historian. The lengthy *Life of Savage* (1744), afterwards reissued in the *Lives of the Poets*, is the account of a friend and companion in Bohemia, and much of it is first-hand evidence; and, though Johnson, as is now known, accepts too much upon the word of Savage, the portrait is straight from the life. He makes the best of the story; the features of the truculent unhappy waster are softened with great skill; and Johnson contrives to satisfy at once his own generous heart and his conscience as a moralist. He can still write heavily and diffusely; there is not the sharp cutting of the *Lives of the Poets*.

When he produced the *Life of Sir Thomas Browne* (1756), Johnson was fresh from his *Dictionary*, where he had laid down the laws of good English. Thus he half-frowns and half-smiles upon the 'exotic words' of Sir Thomas, saying that they are often 'superfluous' and 'obscure,' and calling his style

> a tissue of many languages; a mixture of heterogeneous words, brought together from distant regions, with terms originally appropriated to one art, and drawn by violence into the service of another. . . . But his innovations are sometimes pleasing, and his temerities happy.

Language, he adds, was in Browne's time 'considered by every writer as a subject on which he might try his plastic skill, by moulding it according to his own fancy.' This could scarcely be better said; and yet Johnson seems to labour under a con-

fusion. Because the vocabulary of the *Religio Medici* would not do for 1756, he speaks as though it were not good for Browne ; not seeing that every age has a right to its own prose ; and that once a master, always a master, however much the language he uses may change afterwards. He is also unable or unwilling to perceive Browne's greatness of vision. He cannot always forbear from praise : ' he appears, indeed, to have been willing to pay labour for truth ' ; ' the spirit and vigour of his pursuit always gives delight.' Yet of *Urn-Burial* he can but say that the inquiry is useless ; he has not a word on the glories of the great finale. It is remarkable that Johnson was so cold to the quality of a prose which had many affinities to, and indeed influenced, his own. In the *Essay on Epitaphs* (1740), a theme that would have tempted the old writer, his cadences, though not his sentiment, had been directly imitated :

> All allusions to the heathen mythology are, therefore, absurd, and all regard for the senseless remains of a dead man impertinent and superstitious. One of the first distinctions of the primitive Christians, was their neglect of bestowing garlands on the dead, in which they are very rationally defended by their apologist in Minutius Felix : ' We lavish no flowers nor odours on the dead,' says he, ' because they have no sense of fragrance or of beauty.' . . . [But we may] pray that the ashes of a friend may lie undisturbed. . . . To censure such expressions, as contrary to religion, or as remains of heathen superstition, would be too great a degree of severity. . . . [Yet] the pope who defaced the statues of the deities at the tomb of Sannazarius is, in my opinion, more easily to be defended, than he that erected them.

VII

Johnson's party pamphlets, four in number, are of little account now. In *Taxation No Tyranny* (1775) he takes the virulent Tory line, and puts all his energy into the question that Burke, in his speech on conciliation with America, had sagaciously put aside : whether, namely, there was the abstract right to tax the colonies. In *Thoughts on the Late Transactions respecting Falkland's Islands* (1771) Johnson is cooler, though in passing he shakes the unknown Junius like a mastiff. Always a hater of war, he derides it above all when waged over a barren ' island thrown aside from human use.' His political views are more picturesque and entertaining in the pages of Boswell. On the other hand, the *Journey*[1] *to the Western Islands of Scotland* (1775), which belongs to the same period, has still too few readers. It has suffered by contrast with Boswell's *Journal* of

the same tour ; but Johnson, after all, is the same man in both works. The opinions on Ossian, on second sight, and other matters, which he threw out in talk, are here gathered into an argument ; and his deeper thoughts and fancies, such as appear in the famed passage on Iona, are saved and wrought up at leisure. Lighter matter is for the most part excluded ; for Johnson knew what Boswell was about, heard extracts from his journal, and warmly approved of his procedure. There are a few flings of the expected kind : ' A Scotchman must be a very sturdy moralist, who does not love Scotland better than truth ; he will always love it better than inquiry.' But the aim is rather to describe the broad features of a partly undiscovered country—its system of education, its culture and popular beliefs. The discussion of the ' second sight ' is judicial, and again reminds us of the legal statements that Johnson furnished to Boswell. In manner the *Journey*, though stately, is less formal and polysyllabic than of old ; and the admirable style of the *Lives of the Poets* is in sight. One sentence which he cancelled before printing, but which has been preserved, is an illustration :

> There is now, I have heard, a body of men, not less decent or virtuous than the Scottish Council, longing to melt the lead of an English cathedral. What they shall melt, it were just that they should swallow.

VIII

When Johnson refused to admire the verse of Hamilton of Bangour, ' I comforted myself,' says Boswell, ' with thinking that the beauties were too delicate for his robust perceptions ' ; and here Boswell, as often happened, saw clearer than his master. The sentence applies to many of Johnson's remarks ; and nothing is easier than to judge him on these lines, and to say, what, as a critic,[1] he is not. But even here we must be careful. He was not so deaf to the richer, or to the newer, kinds of poetry as might be imagined. Nor was he quite blind to the poetry of landscape or of the ballad. He appreciates *Il Penseroso* and *Grongar Hill* ; the *Castle of Indolence* is ' a scene of lazy luxury which fills the imagination.' He helped Percy over the *Reliques*, and earned his thanks. His dislike of blank verse is well known ; but he gets over it, however unwillingly, when he reads Milton, Thomson, and Akenside ; and his objection is, in effect, the sound one, that blank verse is seldom very good, and that unless it is very good it had better not exist. We are

always coming in Johnson upon something deeper than his ordinary code and the prejudices which he let fly in his talk. Whilst making the *Dictionary*, he had filled his mind with the older poets, and had chosen many quotations for their beauty ; and these recollections, though less often than we might wish, help to keep him right. He had edited Shakespeare, and knew better than to claim that Pope was a poet of the highest order.

Johnson's resounding heresies are of interest not only for their errors, or because they are always his own (as Thomas Twining observed, ' there is in him no echo '), but for the seed of truth that they contain. His attack on Shakespeare's ' quibbles ' is well warranted ; although, it is true, he will not see that the wordplay of Gaunt or Lady Macbeth, or of Margaret in *Richard III.*,

> And turns the sun to shade ; alas ! alas !
> Witness my son, now in the shade of death,

is not meant to amuse, but is in the nature of a safety-valve, with a grim kind of hiss in it, for the escape of passion. Johnson's best-known outcry, against the ' harsh [1] diction ' of *Lycidas*, can partly be explained in his favour ; for his habit is to use the epithet less of sound than of language that is forced, strained, or artificial ; and this, if anything, can be fairly charged against some parts of *Lycidas*. When he says of *Paradise Lost* that ' none ever wished it longer than it is,' or when he cannot endure the sacrifice of Ophelia or Cordelia, Johnson is speaking, not indeed for the higher criticism, but for the natural man, who is never extinguished even in the most official critic. In the first case he is impatient and weary ; in the second, though he finds theoretical reasons for his feeling, he is speaking in mere tenderness of heart. Many people, if they are honest, will own that they cannot in truth endure *Othello* ; and it is somewhat strange that Johnson could.

Some of his pronouncements, of course, are on a par with Goethe's dislike of the *Divine Comedy*, or with Matthew Arnold's ban on French verse ; but they can usually be understood, even if not to his credit. An ear tuned to Pope's ' numbers ' was likely to find those of *Lycidas* ' unpleasing.' His censures upon most of Gray's odes—interspersed though they be with true and shrewd things (' there is a kind of cumbrous splendour which we wish away ')—are notorious, but can probably be accounted for by the same metrical prejudice, and by an aversion to a rhetoric that was not his own. But these are particular cases ; and we must reckon with the general fact that Johnson, in

spite of certain concessions, as a critic looked backwards rather than forwards. He had against him not only the poetry of the future but some of the best of his own day. To this his attitude was blank, or dubious ; and it is well indicated in his saying of Chatterton, ' it is wonderful how the whelp has written such things.' He did not, so far as we know, ask the booksellers to include Chatterton or Smart in the *Lives of the Poets*. He befriended Smart ; but it was Boswell who recognised the ' strange mixture of the *dun obscure*,' the ' glowing genius at times,' of the *Song to David*. One of the signs of the new age was to be the undermining of Johnson's critical authority. But one thing must be remembered in judging him. We, looking back, easily perceive that there was a ' progress,' however broken, of this new poetry ; a progress which is usually called ' romanticism,' or, more accurately perhaps, *préromantisme* ; and that there is a certain historic unity in the phenomenon. Neither Johnson nor any one else could see this, more than dimly, at the time. He disliked this and that ; he disliked piecemeal ; but he was only half aware that he was opposing a movement, ' through creeks and inlets making.' His tendency was to regard ' ode, and elegy, and sonnet ' as in the nature of freaks and aberrations—perhaps degenerations. We may, indeed, ask ourselves whether it is possible for a critic to go further wrong than to confound birth with decay. But very few critics, however excellent, have also been prophets. And Johnson, once more, claims deep regard, not only on the historic estimate, but in his own right. Gray, with his nicer and rarer judgment, and his true feeling for the Greek spirit, yet left only notes and remarks, no solid critical edifice like the *Lives of the Poets* ; and as we look back past Coleridge towards Dryden, it is Johnson who stands between. We are now, presumably, immune from his errors, and possibly also from his good sense.

We are not to judge him by his more superstitious period ; it is also that of his deepest moral melancholy, when his mind was little free to judge of art. In the *Miscellaneous Observations* (1745) upon *Macbeth*, and in the *Ramblers*, he is often acute, but very surly ; he measures the verse of Milton by a foot-rule, finds that *Samson Agonistes* is destitute of a ' middle,' chafes over Spenser, and condemns the phrase ' the blanket of the dark.' In *Rasselas*, as we know, he lays down, like Reynolds, that the business of art and poetry is to be abstract ; ' we do not number the streaks of the tulip.' This is the *locus classicus* for that fatal eighteenth-century tenet. We can only ask how a conversation between Johnson and William Blake would have ended. Surely

the votary of 'minute particulars' would have called out 'False!' in 'electrifying' tones, as he did in the law-court at Chichester; and he would have been right. Yet this is only half of Imlac's doctrine, which is not a mean or narrow one, even though it confound the poet with the preacher. To be a poet is too difficult; for it is needful

> that he estimate the happiness and misery of every condition, observe the power of the passions in all their combinations . . . rise to general and transcendental truths, which will always be the same . . . consider himself as presiding over the thoughts and manners of future generations; as a being superior to time and place. . . . And, that his style may be worthy of his thoughts, [he] must, by incessant practice, familiarise himself to every delicacy of speech and grace of harmony.

IX

Johnson's editing[1] of the text of Shakespeare was in some ways truly scientific and has always been honourably mentioned. He consulted, though without system, quartos and folios; his line was conservative; and he sought to explain every difficulty. Those who have waded through the notes in any of the great American 'variorum' editions know that three names are sure to arrest the mind: they are those of Johnson, Goethe, and Coleridge. It is Johnson who often pierces to the sense of a passage. And his notes on the characters, if not those of a poet or 'subtle-souled psychologist,' are full of his peculiar genius. Those on Polonius and Falstaff are the best known; but there are many more. In Falstaff he appreciates a species of wit and mirth utterly unlike his own; he shows great freedom of mind, and does not, like some modern judges, try to moralise the matter. The *Preface* is his greatest single piece of criticism, on the greatest theme that he ever attempted.

Some of the argument is outworn, because it is now needless to explode the 'unities'; but the work of destruction could not have been better done. And it is clear throughout that Johnson, dogmatic as he is, is pulled in different directions. He cannot quite shake off the official 'rules,' but he is always rising up against them; 'there is always,' he says, 'an appeal open from criticism to nature.' Dryden and Pope had made similar protests, but had not reasoned them out. With his eye on the French drama, and also on the English tradition which had produced *Cato* (not to mention *Irene*), Johnson defends the mixture of tragedy and comedy in Shakespeare. Such a plea

has long been superfluous ; but his statement of the case can never lose its interest. As I have suggested, it marks an advance on the mood of *Rasselas*. Life is itself a tragi-comedy, and the playwright so presents it. It is a scene ' in which, at the same time, the reveller is hasting to his wine, and the mourner burying his friend.' That is an obvious and almost commonplace remark ; but not so what follows :

> . . . in which the malignity of one is sometimes defeated by the frolic of another ; and many mischiefs and many benefits are done and hindered without design.

This vision of the rule of chance, or of what appears to be chance, in shaping the event with a kind of irony, has a very modern ring ; although Johnson, if asked, would doubtless have said that all was in the hands of Providence. In any case, Shakespeare depicts the ' real state of sublunary nature.' Yet, as we have noticed, Johnson cannot bear the picture to be *too* faithful ; he demurs to the massacre of the innocents, especially when they are women. We must not ' sacrifice virtue to convenience ' ; and this is one of those ' defects ' of the poet, which it is the business of ' impartial criticism ' to state. Johnson's faithful dealing with the defects of Shakespeare, whether just or not, is a good corrective to some of the idolatries of the next age. There has been subtler and more catholic criticism than his, but hardly any that it is so difficult to forget ; and this is no less true of the *Lives of the English Poets* (1779-81).

X

The plan of the *Lives* is simple and original. First comes the biography, with the external history of the poet's writings ; next, if there be enough material, a picture of his mind and person ; and then his works are judged in chronological order and *ex cathedra*. The whole story is told in short, self-contained paragraphs, which often end emphatically, like the clanging-to of an iron gate. Milton

> did not sell literature to all comers at an open shop ; he was a chamber-milliner, and measured his commodities only to his friends.

And on *Cato* the verdict is that

> its success has introduced or confirmed among us the use of dialogue too declamatory, of unaffecting elegance, and chill philosophy.

We are listening to the famous, crushing, silencing, conversation,

and to its periods. They seem to become less ample as the *Lives* proceed ; they are most elaborate in the account of the 'metaphysical' poets, in the *Life of Cowley*. At any rate, the plainer idiom, which came out in Johnson's talk, is always at his command. It is often found in those portraits, or 'characters,' which, being drawn from memory or oral tradition, perhaps no one else could have provided :

> He was not able to dress or undress himself, and neither went to bed nor rose without help. His weakness made it very difficult for him to be clean. His hair had fallen almost all away, and he used to dine sometimes with Lord Oxford, privately, in a velvet cap. His dress of ceremony was black, with a tye-wig and a little sword.

The *Lives* had a very different inception from the other great works of the period. The *Decline and Fall* and the *Wealth of Nations* had been long prepared in the minds of their authors, and had been chosen by the authors. Here the subject, or rather the booksellers who proposed it, may be said to have chosen Johnson. He accepted the task, thinking he was to write some 'little lives' and 'little prefaces'; but it grew upon his hands and the result was his masterpiece. The booksellers chose the poets whose works they thought would pay ; and Johnson indolently agreed to their choice, causing the admission only of Isaac Watts, Blackmore, Pomfret, and Yalden. Also he says, 'I think I have persuaded the booksellers to insert something of Thomson' ; but it is strange, if such persuasion should have been needed. As it happened, the principle of selection had its merits. Living writers were excluded ; and the starting-point, the mid-seventeenth century, included some of an elder race who were still at work after the Restoration ; among these were Milton, Waller, and Cowley. Swift, Addison, and others were admitted on the strength of their verses ; but their whole career and work are reviewed. Johnson was thus able to treat of all the poets who were nearest, as well as of some who were foreign, to his taste and understanding. Dryden and Pope were in the forefront, with Butler and Prior as light auxiliaries ; Waller, Denham, Tickell, Garth, followed, and the rank and file of the couplet-mongers, the sutlers and sweepers, the Pitts and Broomes and Fentons. These made up the great 'classical' host, of whom Johnson himself, heavily armoured, led the last supports. The result is an ample record of this great school, or tradition, made by one of its masters. There was no public then for Herrick or Marvell, for Vaughan or Crashaw, and no doubt they were omitted on business

principles; but it is unlikely that Johnson regretted the loss. No one had seriously forestalled him in his great task. From compilers [1] like Giles Jacob, Theophilus Cibber, Robert Shiels, and from the writers in the earlier *Biographica Britannica*, he seems to have drawn little or nothing. Their works are used by students, but they had produced neither criticism nor literature.

To comment on the *Lives* would be to review the poetry of more than a century; but one or two features may be noticed. Johnson can be severe on his own literary ancestors. His analysis of Dryden's intellect, so logical and rational, can hardly be excelled; but he judges him harshly as a man. His own mental and moral struggles were different from Dryden's; and he was alien to that flexible and elusive spirit, which every generation has to judge anew. What he appreciates is Dryden's mastery of his craft and his princely ringing verse. In the *Life of Pope*, Johnson feels that it is his duty to be retained for the defence, at a moment when defence was needed; and he is careful, in his conclusion, not to put Pope's claims too high. He is pleading, what no one now denies, that Pope is a true poet; 'a definition which shall exclude Pope will not easily be made.' He compliments Joseph Warton's *Essay on Pope*, and on its appearance had called it a 'just specimen of literary moderation.' But in the *Life* he does not hold the balance so well as Warton. The whole tenor is to glorify Pope, who is sometimes praised for the wrong things, or out of proportion. Johnson pays too much attention and respect to the *Homer*, as compared with the *Satires and Epistles*. Yet he is no idolater; and his logical sense, as well as his aversion to Pope's tenets, inspires his censure of the *Essay on Man*. 'Never were penury of knowledge and vulgarity of sentiment so happily disguised.' Lessing had come, though by another path, to a similar verdict in his essay of 1755, *Pope ein Metaphysiker!* The *Life* is full of good and provocative things, such as the discussion on 'representative metre'; but its main value lies in the biography. Johnson could not know all the evidence for Pope's tricks and duplicities; but his picture of the poet's character and habits has not been equalled. His account, in the *Life of Cowley*, of the vices of the 'metaphysical school' is always quoted as final, like the judgments of his contemporary and friend, Lord Stowell, on a question of law. Johnson, of course, is blind to all their virtues; he talks of Donne and Cowley in the same breath. He is equally frigid towards Donne's comparison of the drops on the lady's brow to the pearls in a 'carkanet,' and towards his

Shakespearean lines on Night. It can only be said that here Johnson simply spoke for his age. The admirers of the older poets usually leaped back from Milton straight to Spenser and Shakespeare ; and we do not find Gray and the Wartons trying to rehabilitate Donne or Marvell. Johnson is much more at home with *Hudibras*, and he tells us exactly why, in the long run, it is tiresome. It is unfortunate that he speaks only of *Hudibras*. He refers to the *Genuine Remains* of Butler, published in 1759 by Thyer of Manchester, but adds that the poet's ' character ' cannot be ' discovered ' from them. Yet the verses and ' detached thoughts ' rescued in those volumes throw much light on Butler's honest and disenchanted mind.

Johnson's behaviour towards Milton and Gray would demand a long discussion. These were the *Lives* that were most sharply attacked ; and the Philistine passages are too well known to quote. Gillray's caricature (1782) of ' Old Wisdom blinking at the stars ' depicts the sage as a horned owl, sitting with a disapproving air underneath the busts of Milton and Pope. Johnson's antipathies as a Tory and churchman to Milton are easily understood. His insensibility to *Lycidas*, which he cannot believe expresses true grief, only shows that he could not, like Keats, seize the *nuance* of ' fair-haired Milton's *eloquent distress*.' But he melts into sympathy, and even into tenderness, in describing the poet's old age ; and his praises of *Paradise Lost* are not merely extorted. He says that Milton

> selected the melodious words with such diligence that from his book alone the art of English poetry might be learned.

Once more, Johnson is paying a tribute for which his more formal canons and ordinary tastes give no clear warrant. Gray he hardly praises except for the *Elegy* ; to the *Odes* he is almost deaf, and yet one thing about them he sees. The style and diction, whatever Gray may make of them himself, would not do as a model. They did, in fact, encourage a false manner, of which poetry had to clear itself. Gray, indeed, was not alone responsible for that manner, so allusive and condensed, and so full of abstractions and mythology. It was all around him ; but he used it so well that he bequeathed its faults. And it really was an obscure manner. Johnson, whatever his own poetical deficiencies, was all for clarity, and against stiff embroidery. It is this kind of perception that gives life to his sweeping censures.

We may rejoice at the attention paid by Johnson to some of the leanest of the poets, who often supply him with a lively

chronicle. Such is Edmund, or 'Rag,' Smith, of Christ Church, so called from his 'negligence of dress.' The author of *Phaedra and Hippolitus* had long been a dead poet; but Johnson remembers tales, at second or third hand, about the 'indecency and licentiousness of his behaviour.' Yet he has a good word for Smith's Latin verses; and, he adds, 'at Oxford, as we all know, much will be forgiven to literary merit.' And he flashes an amusing light upon college discipline, which is at all times much the same:

> Thus tenderly was he treated; the governors of his college could hardly keep him, and yet wished that he would not force them to drive him away. . . . He was still a genius and a scholar, and Oxford was unwilling to lose him; he was endured, with all his pranks and his vices, two years longer.

The end was that Smith 'eat and drank till he found himself plethorick,' and died of a medicine too 'forcible,' which he had prescribed for himself, the apothecary protesting. In the *Lives* there are many such traits,[1] gathered from Johnson's own memories, or from old men who had known others who knew the facts, or from obscure books. Some of his 'minute memorials' of Smith came to him in conversation, from his friend Gilbert Walmsley.

XI

Rhetoric, in its proper and neutral sense, is any unusual management of language that is employed to move or impress the hearers. It means a greater symmetry of answering clauses, more dislocation of the natural order, and a more complex grammar, than would be used in common speech; also, and in consequence, a more studied rhythm. Often, too, there is a larger allowance of learned, or foreign-sounding, or ancient words: coins, we may say, like the old-fashioned heavy crown-piece, that are of excellent value though rarely seen. To Johnson this style became a second nature, and in its extreme form it constitutes 'Johnsonese.' He could speak in it, pray in it, think in it, and improvise or dictate in it, with speed and precision. He could also do without it, and be as 'Saxon' as Cobbett; but he is always coming back to it. The reply to Macpherson ('I received your foolish and impudent letter . . . your rage I defy') is a characteristic mixture of plain speech and emphatic inversions. There are no long rare words; these are only a superficial feature of the style, and a cheap quarry for

the parodists.[1] Johnson, when he used them, was moved by an honest passion for the orotund; we hear the 'loud voice, and slow deliberate utterance'; and, as Boswell says, 'while, therefore, Dr. Johnson's sayings are read, let his manner be taken along with them.' But deeper in grain was his rhetorical habit, which was derived directly from the Latin, but also from the English writers who had already followed the Latin. Like the long words, it is more conspicuous in his middle period, that of the *Dictionary*. In the *Lives of the Poets* it remains, but in a less mechanical form; the language, though still carefully chiselled, is as a rule more direct and natural.

The most obvious and tangible characters of Johnson's rhetoric are inversion, balance, and contrast. Inversion, or a slightly un-English order of words and phrases, takes many forms. The simplest is the use of one that is natural in Latin: 'Frogs there were none'; 'Of tea what I shall say?'; 'Of Gilbert Walmsley, thus presented to my mind, let me indulge myself in the remembrance.' The grammarian may be left to classify other variations. There is, for example, the infinitival subject:

> To bring a lover, a lady, and a rival, into the fable; to entangle them . . . to make them meet . . . to fill their mouths with . . . to distress them . . . to deliver them . . . is the business of a modern dramatist.

And here is one more species: 'the notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind.' This trick, which the genius of English repudiates, seems to have been made fashionable by Johnson, though only for a time. It is not prominent in Bolingbroke, and is less prominent even in Sir Thomas Browne than in Johnson, who may have learnt it from that master. Antithesis has a different history. It had always been embedded, though not obtrusively, in our more elaborate prose. Dryden and Addison used it when they chose, but not so as to force itself on the ear. Bolingbroke used it freely, but he carries it off in the sweep of his periods; he is its master, Johnson is too much its servant. But the balanced sentence suits a dogmatic way of thinking, and is capable of great variety. Sometimes a polysyllabic and pedantic expression is clinched by a short sharp stroke, and there is contrast within contrast:

> Dryden is sometimes vehement and rapid; Pope is always smooth, uniform, and gentle. Dryden's page is a natural field, rising into inequalities, and diversified by the varied exuberance of abundant

vegetation ; Pope's is a velvet lawn, shaven by the scythe, and levelled by the roller.

There would be no end to such examples ; but the essence of Johnson's style escapes analysis. Speaking or writing, he could not help giving some turn to his tongue that belongs to no one else, and least of all to his imitators. His lightest words assume a sort of authority, and are stamped as with a die. This is most apparent when his English is of the plainest. Writing to introduce Baretti to Thomas Warton at Oxford, he remarks, in twenty-six monosyllables : ' he has time but for a short stay, and will be glad to have it filled up with as much as he can hear and see.' There is nothing much in that ; but who else would have said it so ? And the style has its subtleties ; for the last sentence probably means, ' all that a foreigner need see, or can understand.' And he goes on, speaking of Bennet Langton :

> I am half afraid of him ; he is no less amiable than formidable. He will, if the forwardness of his spring be not blasted, be a credit to you, and the University.

Johnson, we may note, separates his clauses, and is free with his commas, which suggest the 'slow deliberate utterance,' interrupted by puffings. Another of his habits, the ' triptology,' derided by Walpole, is not uncommon, and is sometimes ludicrous in its effect. We are majestically informed that Blackmore's *Creation* ' wants neither harmony of numbers, accuracy of thought, nor elegance of diction.'

XII

But enough of technique ; it tells us, indeed, something about the man ; yet what of the man ? Like every one we know well, he is always surprising us ; and behold, we do not know him at all. There is no one, however experienced, who cannot learn something from Johnson about human life. The case against life he often presents with the skill of an advocate who is convinced, or blinded, by his brief. He agrees with the genial Adam Smith that pain is always more pungent than pleasure, and that there is more of it in the world. The most general source of pain is not the physical evils that no one can escape, but the vanity of our wishes. Johnson preaches this text vigorously in his talk and letters, in his prose and verse ; for example, in his Latin lines *Gnothi Seauton*. He dreaded this maxim, ' know thyself.' His sense of sin and shortcoming and his dread of the natural end amounted to a disease. Its chief

symptom was slothful despondency (*Accidia*), the vice that reproaches itself in vain. There are also signs that Johnson's great frame was vexed, beyond the common, by his senses; and he might have been a saner man if we can imagine—as we cannot—a dash of Fielding in his composition. But he had himself well in hand, and did not judge others puritanically. Weighed by any reasonable standard he was a very good man. His brutality appeals to us English, because it is our own; that is, it is devoid of malice; it is savagery rather than brutality. He could have faced very fairly an inquisition on the seven sins. *Ira* he had in abundance, but it was usually righteous, and soon blew over when it was not. *Gula*, no doubt, beset him, but in a comic fashion. *Superbia* was his, but of the right kind. *Avaritia* and *Invidia* were unknown to him; he was liberal and magnanimous. His charity, placability, and sympathy are everywhere on record. Yet all this might be true of a less noticeable man; and we ask for more distinctive traits, of which only a few can be noted here.

We remember Johnson by his conversation, which he practised as an art and not always for victory. And his conversation we owe to his malady; for he could not bear to be long alone. Deep down is the tremulous piety which finds expression in his *Prayers and Meditations*. They are the voice of his solitude and were written only for himself; but, here as always, he studied literary form, and gave it not only finish but often beauty too. Yet company and friendship, next to religion, were his consolations. He acquired a mundane philosophy of the passing moment, which served him well. Life being largely made up of little matters, and curiosity unquenchable, and the pleasures of observation being the last to fail us, let us watch and learn all we can, and talk out and argue all things. Let us know all conditions of mankind and womankind, King George and Bet Flint, Levett and Burke, Hannah More and Tom Tyers. You can get something out of each of them, and also, being a born dominie, *into* each of them. Talk your very best in every company, and be conclusive; you may draw blood, but your words will be remembered. Johnson had hundreds of acquaintances, and he could not but see that *their* world was on the whole not so very bad, nor yet very good. Most people, if we drop our theories of pain and pleasure, are seen to be neither very happy nor the reverse. Grief, at first, demands solitude; but give 'time to digest it,' and it may wear away. 'Love is but one of many passions,' as Shakespeare saw. Johnson had felt love absorbingly, but he came to rely more and more on

friendship. 'I must be in a wretched state, indeed,' he said on his deathbed to Burke, 'when your company would not be a delight to me.' His expressions of kindness to Boswell are very strong; but he is against too much sentiment, and is ever ready to cry 'Something too much of this,' when Boswell exceeds. He tells him not to multiply words of affection but to put them down in his notebook. In other cases friendship shades off into regard, goodwill, mere liking; but the sum of warmth diffused from it all is very great.

We draw these impressions from many witnesses; and, listening to them all, we get some idea of the strong, peculiar spirit, which no one of them could appreciate as a whole. They loved him, and they could see his luminous and acute understanding. Its limitations are plainer to us, not because we are superior, but owing to the lapse of time. It is needless to try to penetrate too far; still, Johnson leaves us with a strong feeling of the unexpressed—of something not covered by reason. His heart and vision are greater than his intellect. The portraits by Reynolds, with their look of tormented strength, confirm this impression; the purblind frown and abstracted air are a half-transparent mask. Sir Joshua also wrote down his memories, and is one of the most sensitive of all the observers. He made the best, because the friendliest, of the parodies of Johnson's conversational style. We hear, and that not only through Boswell's megaphone, the voices of Burke and Garrick, of Robertson and Langton. If only we had more from Goldsmith, the chorus would be complete. But, in compensation, there is Fanny Burney, whose impressions and *verbatim* reports of Johnson in his later years are at least as good as Boswell's. And there is also the counter-chorus: the surly Hawkins, whose biography (1787) has its value; the outwearied Mrs. Thrale [1] (Mrs. Piozzi), with her vivid invaluable *Anecdotes* (1786); the murmuring Gibbon, the disgusted Dr. Thomas Campbell, and the critical yet fair-minded Thomas Twining: not to speak of Horace Walpole, who was not an eye-witness. An anthology of the worst things said against Johnson would be of interest. But he has even more friends than he had when alive. There are scholars who may vie for the title given by Boswell to Malone, *Johnsonianissimus*. The cult of him is deep in our blood, and appears to grow, and it is due not merely to his virtues. We do not mind his dislike of systematic philosophy and of foreign ideas; we feel that at least it secures him against mad logic. His belief in the social and clerical hierarchy enlists our still numerous high Tories, while others see his Toryism

in a humorous light as a thing of long ago. It has still to be explained why he attracts not only literary persons but all who read for the sake of entertainment. He is loved for many things—for his goodness, for his wit, for his extreme distinctness, for his eternal quotableness, and above all because we know him. And we know him because Boswell, the lesser man and greater artist, has painted himself and his friend in the same picture.

XIII

His career, before his meeting with Johnson in 1763, had been aimless and unpiloted. James Boswell [1] (1740-1795) had unwillingly put himself in training for the Scottish bar, and had shown a somewhat unpromising passion for letters. He had printed verses, which are very like other verses ; and also, at the age of twenty-three, his correspondence with Andrew Erskine, another rhyming and ebullient youth. Boswell's letters already show his high spirits, his self-confidence, and his wonderful gift of resilience. He was also subject to low spirits ; and liked to think, as he afterwards informed Paoli, that he had ' intensely applied himself to metaphysical researches,' and that ' in the very heat of youth ' he had felt that the pursuit '*non est tanti*.' He was always to be troubled with fits of the ' hyp,' or ' spleen,' the fashionable ailment. There are glimpses in these letters of his casual reading. ' Upon my word,' he writes in 1761, ' Churchill does scourge with a vengeance ; I should not like to come under his discipline.' Also, like a sound Scot, he admires Kames's *Elements of Criticism*, which ' has the good properties of all four elements '—a dubious compliment. Already, too, Boswell had begun to cultivate men of note ; he was known to Hume and Robertson ; and he had long desired to know Johnson. Their friendship was like one of the rare marriages that are made in heaven ; it was instantaneous ; and no one can estimate how much the fame of Johnson owes to Boswell, or the talent of Boswell to Johnson. He at once began to hive information about his hero ; and, after a tour abroad, he went on, partly under Johnson's tutelage, to attempt more serious composition. In 1767 he produced a *roman à clef*, *Dorando, a Spanish Tale*, in which the personages of the famous and protracted ' Douglas case ' appear under fancy names. Dorando is Archibald, first Duke of Douglas. Don Ferdinand is his nephew, another Archibald, whose legitimacy was impugned by Arvidoso, namely the Duke of Hamilton. The tale is neatly told ; and Boswell struck into the fray at a critical

moment. The Scottish suit was about to go against Don Ferdinand ; whose plea he next set out in a legal pamphlet, the *Essence of the Douglas Cause* (1767). The House of Lords, on appeal, pronounced for Don Ferdinand. These unremembered works show two, at any rate, of Boswell's great qualities—his power of dealing with hard facts, and his vivacity. He was presently to see them recognised.

In 1768 appeared his *Account of Corsica, Journal of a Tour to that Island, and Memoirs of Pascal Paoli* : a work in which, as Johnson noted, the *Journal* (which includes the *Memoirs*) stands out from the rest. ' Your history was copied from books ; your journal rose out of your own experience and observation.' Here can be seen the true Boswell, the inquirer, retailer, describer, and worshipper. His ambition to know persons of eminence grew by what it fed on ; he found his way to his nutriment through every crevice, like the white ant ; he had already reached Voltaire and Rousseau ; and his hero now was General Pasquale Paoli, the leader of the Corsican patriots against Genoese oppression. Boswell had seen Paoli some years before, had been welcomed by him, and had cross-questioned him :

> I so far presumed upon his goodness to me as to take the liberty of asking him a thousand questions with regard to the most minute and private circumstances of his life.

In 1769 he escorted Paoli in England, and figured at the Stratford festival in his celebrated Corsican dress. He looks quite well in it, and inflated with happiness. Who but he, wishing to insert in his book some epigrams of Seneca, would have advertised in the press for the best translations, and used them accordingly ?

Boswell was thirty-three when he took notes for his *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* The tour was made in 1773, and the book appeared in 1785 ; it was at once eagerly read, quoted, and caricatured. A series of prints, which are rude and clever rather than malignant, presents chosen scenes from the *Journal* : the couple pacing the malodorous High Street in Edinburgh, and Johnson grumbling, ' I smell you in the dark ' ; Boswell on his knees, in Col's boat, pulling at the rope that was offered him to keep him quiet ; and Boswell's nightmare vision of the headless Lord Kilmarnock, with an axe upstanding from the trunk. This side of the *Journal* was easy to travesty ; there had been no such intimate record, of the same kind, in the language. But the book shows

no immaturity ; Boswell is in full possession of his method of mingled narrative and reporting. The *Journal* is a smaller artistic performance than the *Life*, only because it is part of the *Life* ; it has a unity and finish of its own ; and there is a note of strangeness and adventure which of necessity is lacking in the *Life*. Scotland was a foreign land to Johnson, as the Highlands were to Boswell himself. The literary men of the cities, and the lords of the isles, stand out with equal distinctness.

The procedure in the *Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* (1791), had been suggested, Boswell tells us, by Mason's *Life and Letters of Gray*. Incident, dialogue, anecdote, and letters are interlaced in a continuous story. There are no chapters, only dates : ' my readers,' Boswell wrote to Percy,

> will, as near as may be, accompany Johnson in his progress, and, as it were, see each scene as it happened.

He is writing a kind of *Odyssey* ; ' and, amidst a thousand entertaining and instructive episodes, the hero is never long out of sight.' And he declares to a friend, ' I think it will be, without exception, the most entertaining book you ever read ' : a forecast which the world has confirmed. Sainte-Beuve, with a touch of unjust contempt, said that the elder Dumas was *amusant*. This is the word for Boswell. All his passion for the exact truth, all his subtle handling of the truth, his honest strengthening of the lights and deft insertion of the shadows, his tact or impudence in forcing the oracle to speak, are employed for our entertainment. To this end he manages to subordinate both Johnson's preaching and his own : both the majestic organ, as he might have said, and the humble pipe its accompaniment. It is as though he saw that Johnson, unassisted, might have been weighed down by his *sentences*, and that the risk must be circumvented. Johnson approved of the enterprise, and of portions that were shown to him of the *Journal* and the *Life* ; and it shows his strength of mind, that he was willing the whole truth should be told. Perhaps, with his keen sense of the mortality of books and fame, he felt that Boswell's work would carry further than his own.

Boswell has the gifts and conscience of the investigator. He had to piece together the records of Johnson before they were acquainted, and in the long intervals between their meetings. His rigour and general accuracy in matters of fact can seldom be challenged. He was often, he says, ' obliged to run half over London, in order to fix a date correctly.' Behind his stories and dialogues there is the exactness of research which gives us con-

fidence. His supreme skill is in the reporting of dialogue. A well-known caricature of the time shows him in the house of Thrale, with his hands on his knees, memorising Johnson's words with an inane rapt expression. The inanity is imported by the artist. We have a clear glimpse in Boswell's notebooks [1] of the manner in which the entries took shape. When they appear in the *Life* rounded off, wrought up, even blended together, it is still in Johnson's manner. The notes were sometimes taken down at a side-table, with the bystanders chafing. There are more novelists who can invent good talk, than biographers who can report it perfectly. The ablest modern 'interview,' compared with a page of the *Life*, will seem ragged and ephemeral. Boswell might have studied *Tristram Shandy* for some of his technique: he inserts all the gestures, and grunts, and blowings of his hero, and conveys the *sound* of his silences while at his food, and also the silence of the company, or of the victim, after a point has been made. His own choric reflections, as he writes and remembers the scene, are equally indispensable.

Boswell has a keen sense of the grotesque, in himself as well as in his Johnson. Much has been said by Macaulay and others of his folly; but his folly, as he more than half perceives, is required for his effect. He has a shrewd idea that we shall enjoy it; and he never spares himself. We enjoy it equally when he is not aware of it. It is a continual surprise, like his sagacity; and Boswell, in his way, is really as hard to understand as Johnson, and more elusive. He is resolved at all costs to go down to fame with his master. There is something feminine in his relationship with Johnson; he is devoted without limit, never at his best when away, always resisting, yielding, and rebounding. Or, to use another figure, he is like the boxer's punchball, which swings back at him only to be punched again, until the man is tired. And after all it is Boswell who writes the book and has the last word, which is by no means always eulogistic. One thing he can see only from the outside: Johnson's melancholy. He may have his own bad moods, of the rueful next morning kind; but the depressions of that deep and clouded spirit he can only watch intently, trying to divine them like a highly intelligent dog, and wagging his tail when they are over.

Sometimes he shows a malice and an injustice the effects of which are hard to eradicate. His method is to heighten and colour the real foibles of a person, in a fashion which it is tiresome to refute. He cannot, indeed, do Goldsmith much harm; and, almost against his will, or perhaps at the call of truth, he

supplies corrective evidence. Still, he has somewhat distorted the popular view of Goldsmith as a man, and has tinged it with contempt. Mrs. Thrale is not so easily rescued from Boswell. He is duly severe on her looseness of statement; but, without going to the *Anecdotes*, we should not realise her *esprit* and powers of observation. Boswell regrets that he did not see her last correspondence with Johnson, on the occasion of her marriage to Piozzi. Had he done so, he might have been hard put to it to excuse a certain brutal epistle; but this was written by an old sick man, wounded in his vanity, his affections, and his dearest prejudice; and his next letter was kind enough.

One illusion that Boswell creates in perfect innocence is well enough known, and is the greatest tribute to his art. Yet, after reading him again, we have to stand back and remind ourselves how well he falsifies the perspective. Johnson is put forward as the centre of the social and intellectual world in the England of his day. But this he was not, save in a limited sense. He was the lord of the Club; there were many, like Reynolds, who owned their debt to him; his stray words might boom and echo over the town, familiar as the great bell of St. Paul's; and he might, in current opinion, be an arbiter of morals and of English. He was known, too, all over Britain. But he was not the centre, either intellectually or as a writer; for there was no centre. There were various groups, or orbits, each with its own focus: Hume in philosophy, Burke in political thinking, Gibbon in learning and historical composition, Gray in poetry, Fielding in fiction, Horace Walpole in letter-writing and the great world. To all of these, except Burke, Johnson was personally alien; and Burke, in spite of his affection for his friend, moved in a world of ideas from which Johnson was almost cut off. Boswell produces his illusion by making us know Johnson almost better than we know all the rest put together. He does it by telling the truth unsparingly: 'I will not make my tiger a cat to please anybody.' He had no mourning relative's eye upon him, and would not have cared in any case. Also, of course, his stage lighting, his 'producing,' always leaves one figure in the foreground. It is all done in good faith. If Johnson knew little of the ferment of mind, or of the movement of poetry, around him, Boswell naturally knew, or cared, even less. This, once more, is why he is at the head of his profession; and he remarks on the *Life*, with some justice, in his own unique fashion,

> I flatter myself it will exhibit him more completely than any person, ancient or modern, has yet been preserved.

XIV

Between his Corsican phase and the publication of the *Journal* Boswell threw off a good deal of miscellaneous prose. In the *London Magazine* he published no less than seventy numbers of the *Hypochondriack* (1777-83); and in the last of these essays he observes somewhat rashly,

> I beg I may not be charged with excessive arrogance when I venture to say that they contain a considerable portion of original thinking.

Many of these papers are concerned with the problems of marriage and the family; but the real theme is Boswell's own 'hypochondria,' its nature, cause, and cure. One of the causes, he opines, may be the 'influence of evil spirits'; and one of the cures for the patient is study and learning, which

> affords salutary food to his faculties, and prevents them from raging ravenously abroad, or secretly gnawing and preying upon the soul itself.

He professes to be cured of the 'hyp,' and to be now ministering to other sufferers; but he never ceases to be proud of his symptoms, or to tell the world about himself. In 1791 the *Memoirs of James Boswell, Esquire*, appeared in the *European Magazine*, and the hand cannot be mistaken. It is explained how in his youth he had imbibed 'an almost enthusiastic notion of the felicity of London,' and how he had 'compressed' the material of the Douglas case 'with a labour of which few are capable.' But Boswell is shown most clearly in his mass of correspondence.

He writes not only to Johnson, but to Rousseau (in odd French), to Wilkes (in facetious Latin), to Percy, to Burke, and even to Chatham: 'could your Lordship find time to honour me now and then with a letter?' Once he writes to Goldsmith, on the success of *She Stoops to Conquer*, saying, in words that it would be hard to improve upon, that he has 'revived natural humour and hearty laughter.' But the best and fullest of his letters go to his closest friend, the Rev. William Johnson Temple, of St. Gluvias in Cornwall, whose discerning note on Gray appears in Johnson's *Life* of the poet. To Temple all is told, and Boswell is hardly less explicit than Pepys. He pours out in one breath business details, remorse and good resolves, and amorous confidences. The chapter of his dealings with women is a curious Scottish *chronique scandaleuse*. Often he has two sets of affairs in train at once: irregular pastime, and

serious courtship. We hear all about both. The letters to 'Zélide' (Isabel de Zuylen), one of his flames, are a kaleidoscope, in which protestations of love, and moral advice, flash out in turn. But Boswell's ruling passion was not gallantry, or money; not even fame, not even acquaintance with the great; it was expression—the capture, at any cost, of the spoken word. His conversations with his cousin, Catherine Blair, who by no means favoured his suit, are as carefully set down as those with Johnson. His family estate is mentioned. He says to her: 'you are very fond of Auchinleck; that is one good circumstance'; and she replies, 'I confess I am—I wish I liked you as well as I like Auchinleck.' Soon he says, in pique, 'If I could have you this moment for my wife, I would not'; and he gets his answer: 'I should not like to put myself in your offer, though.' In 1769 he married another cousin, Margaret Montgomerie, the lady who found it so difficult to like Johnson. She forgave Boswell much, and the union was fortunate for him; he truly speaks of 'my fervent attachment, notwithstanding all my irregularities.' After her death in 1789 life told upon him; towards the end his despondency came back, less fitfully now; and he seems, in spite of his literary note, in some measure to have lost caste. But meantime he had finished his work, he had expressed himself, he had depicted his master, and he had seen the fame of both assured and inseparable.

CHAPTER VI

THE NOVEL: SAMUEL RICHARDSON

I

After the year 1740 the English novel [1] quickened rapidly out of lower forms; and it came to express, far better than the poetry could do, the temper of the age and the race. A Briton will always feel more at home with Fielding and even with Sterne than with Gray or Thomson. And there were soon first-rate examples of the two great species of fiction: in *Clarissa* and *Tom Jones*, of the tale that is symmetrically planned and executed; and in *Roderick Random* or *A Sentimental Journey*, of the tale that rambles from episode to episode. Nor did the four great practitioners depend on the stimulus of a literary revival. The poets drank at the wells of Chaucer, and Spenser, and Milton, and Dryden; there were no such models for the craft of prose fiction. The essayists, the makers of 'characters,' and the comic dramatists furnished hints and suggestions; but the true, the lasting, pattern of the novel had to be created. It is wonderful how quickly this was done, by a few ruling spirits. But there remains a very wide gulf between these and the inferior crowd. There is no such abundance of talent just short of the best, as we find in our Renaissance drama, or in the fiction of 1850. The work of the four masters stands high, but the foothills are low. They are indeed often pleasing; and they are, as I shall hope to show, not barren. The minor fiction has not merely what is called an historical interest: a term we often apply to books that we feel we ought to read, but do not read if we can help it. Still, it is a sharp descent from *Joseph Andrews* or *Peregrine Pickle* to the *Female Quixote* and *David Simple*; whereas *Esmond* and *Silas Marner* are surrounded by work that is only less excellent. Literary history is made by the greater men, and illuminated by the smaller. Richardson and Sterne not only left their trace at home but earned European note and influence; while Fielding and Smollett, so much less famous overseas, are the fountain-heads of the native novel.

There is no need to stay long in the graveyards of fiction,

which were already crowded when *Pamela* appeared. Some service was done by the numerous translators, who imported good and bad work with little discrimination. In the six volumes (1720) entitled a *Select Collection of Novels*, wheat and chaff are mingled: tales from Cervantes, Machiavelli's *Belphegor*, and the *Princess of Cleves*, are there, along with much trash 'from the French original.' Mme de la Fayette and Cervantes were admirable models, if only they had been studied more. But over much of this imported matter there is the trail of unreal sentiment, united with diffuse analysis—a double heritage from those old romances over which Lady Mary Wortley Montagu pored in her youth. This method Richardson was to adopt, transferring it from their phantasmagoric scene to the middle-class world of the Harlowes, and to pass on to posterity. He was also to extinguish, if not immediately, some fashionable women novelists, only one of whom is now more than a shadow. The dubious Mrs. Manley's *New Atalantis* (1709) may be dismissed; it belongs to the former age; it is a record of intrigues in 'high life,' reported or concocted, under feigned names; and it left an unpleasant trail behind it. Mrs. Penelope Aubin was another hack romancer; it must be enough to give part of the title of her *Noble Slaves, or the Lives and Adventures of Two Lords and Two Ladies who were Shipwrecked . . . in the West Indies* (1710). Mrs. Jane Barker,[1] another copious authoress, produced in 1723 her *Patchwork Screen*, and in 1726 a *Lining to the Patchwork Screen*. Each of these is a series of moral essays sprinkled with tales of the disagreeable kind that may be termed the mawkish-realistic. One is the history of the 'Portuguese Nun,' Marianna Alcoforado, which was already familiar in French and English; but Mrs. Barker distorts it painfully. Much more notice is due to Mrs. Eliza Haywood (? 1693-1756), who wrote profusely both before and after the coming of Richardson. She had published plays, and memoirs in the style of the *New Atalantis*; she had been derided and contemned by Pope and Swift. Then she mended her ways, and produced, or edited, the instructive *Female Spectator* and the *Parrot* (Ch. IV.). Two of her later novels are curious and sprightly. They are not mere followings of Richardson, although they describe the upper middle class, and are high-sententious and virtuous in strain. *Jemmy and Jenny Jessamy* (1753) is a pleasant tale of two young people, distantly related, brought up together, and destined by their parents to marry. They are devoted to each other, but decide to see the world first before taking any risks; and their experiences and observations are recited, without any

sort of plot. They undoubtedly do see the world: Jemmy, a kind of Tom Jones, has adventures and amours of a passing kind. He meets a lady, a stranger, who pays off her card debts to him in a fashion too familiar in such stories, and who cuts him the next morning. Jenny, who is very agreeably drawn, acquires the toleration of a woman of sense for these incidents, and observes, 'I shall not be so unreasonable as to expect more constancy from you, than human nature and your constitution will allow.' But of herself she takes good care, and does not for a moment call on Jemmy's toleration. Villains plot to estrange them, but in vain, and all ends well. The book is an interesting rogues' gallery, and the plan is original. Mrs. Haywood drew another quick-witted heroine, of a more frivolous make, in her *History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* (1751). The baffled villain is in this case a 'gentleman-commoner' of Oxford; and there is much useful moralising in the intervals of duelling and intriguing. Betsy, a good enough girl in grain, goes through many courtships and trials, and a wretched marriage, before she is united to her Trueworth. She is a coquette, who in the end comes to her senses without losing her high spirit; and this in spite of having been several times, as the authoress delicately puts it, 'pretty near the crisis of her fate.' Of Oxford, one of the characters observes that it is

> indeed a very censorious place. . . . I have frequently told the ladies, between jest and earnest, that I thought it was a town of the most scandal, and the least sin, of any in the world.

II

Defoe, who died in 1731, had written fiction almost to the end; the *Military Memoirs of Captain George Carleton* (1728) is the last story of which he is the undoubted author. He had ignored many things—natural beauty, and chivalrous love, and the society of the gentle. His world is that of gaols and dens, of seaports and savage inlands and desert isles, and of London in the Plague. His literature is the sea-dog's journal, the gallows-foot confession, the news-sheet, the moral tract, and the memoir. His characters, whether honest men or rogues, are mostly homespun, literal, engrossed in detail, and wholly British in grain. Nothing can dislodge him from his strip of solid earth. He had nothing to do with the drama, or with foreign fiction, or with the finished portraiture of Addison. His tales have little structure; they follow the tradition of the

vagrant 'life and adventures.' He has a most remarkable style, which looks as if it were no style but produces the illusion of life. It could hardly serve as a pattern for the fiction that was to come; it is only right for Defoe's peculiar purpose. His influence can be traced in the *Robinsonaden* abroad, and now and then at home, in such books as *Peter Wilkins*. But he is rather the forerunner than the parent of the great novelists. In two respects he set them an example, and yet we cannot call them his scholars. He was a realist, and also a moralist; but these traits were deep in the literature of the time, and came into the novel from many sources.

Realism, rightly speaking, is the use of minute and faithful detail, heedless of beauty and careful only to be expressive. We can trace it, in various forms, in all the masters of fiction; but if any one is to answer for its prevalence, it is Swift rather than Defoe. Swift was famous, and known to the lettered and scholarly class. It was through the creator of the Yahoo and the bard of the lady's toilet that offences first came on any considerable scale. However it arose, realism even of the harsher sort was a boon to the novel, keeping it virile in the midst of sentiment and recording the hard and seamy side of life. The other feature, the unabashed moral or social purpose, takes in Defoe a rather prosaic and commercial shape. In Richardson it is the primary aim. 'Instruction, Madam,' he wrote to Lady Echlin, 'is the pill; amusement is the gilding.' Fielding, a practical reformer full of generous indignation, rarely allows his moral to warp his art, although in *Amelia* it tempts him into digression. Smollett was a satirist smouldering with a wrath that explodes against the abuses of the marine and the vices of the city. Sterne, the least responsible of them all, preaches the morality of the heart and feelings, and also writes formal, or rather informal, sermons. Pure fantastic invention like that of *Peter Wilkins* is rare until we reach Beckford's *Vathek*. As we know, the ethical strain pervades much of the best poetry, the citizen drama of Lillo, all the works of Johnson, and the art of Hogarth. Often it is combined with a drastic realism of portraiture. Most of these writers come from the upper middle class, and are inclined to satirise the world of quality, the Lovelaces and Lord Fellamars. Their code and temper are in marked contrast with that of the patricians, Chesterfield or Walpole. True, the gulf is almost as wide between any pair of the four great novelists; but they all have something of the missionary spirit.

Thus, by 1740, the ingredients of the novel were there, and

only awaited the quickening spark. The structure was nearly ready; the tradition of great length persisted from the decaying romances; the device of telling the story through a series of letters was known. The pattern of *Gil Blas*, of the novel without a plan, was also familiar. The romances were full of the slow elaborate dissection of sentiment. The pursuit of a chaste lady by a libertine was nothing new in fiction. The little, edifying tale, with English or exotic names, had been made popular by the essayists; and in the hands of Addison, when he left them free, the lay tract became a delicate, disinterested etching of life and its humours. Nothing quite like the *Coverley Papers* was achieved by the great novelists until Goldsmith came. But the *Coverley Papers* were not a novel. A little more, and they would have made a perfect short story. But the novel was to develop on the lines of the long story; and almost every one of these precedents was to influence Richardson. He was to design a real plot, based on real life and on a large scale; to steep it in sentiment, and in a kind of passion, and yet to moralise everything; to transplant the analytic habit into the bourgeois world; and to throw in much sinister and squalid episode. He was also to build up a crowd of characters whose fortunes were followed by his readers like those of personal acquaintance.

III

It has long been a matter for surprise that the first English stories which 'oped the sacred source of sympathetic tears' in sempstresses and duchesses, in Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and Frau Klopstock and Denis Diderot, should have been composed with such strictly family aims, and should have come from an oldish timid master-printer of moderate cultivation. The outer life of Samuel Richardson [1] (1689-1761) was of the humdrum kind, and nothing in its aspect suggested that his fame would be European. It was to rest on his three 'histories,' of *Pamela* (1740), of *Clarissa* (1747-8), and of *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753-4). He was born, he tells us, of a family of 'middling note'; at thirty he set up in trade for himself; he was the virtuous apprentice who prospered. For a time he printed the journals of the Commons; latterly he became head of the Stationers' Company. He was very punctilious in business, and very domestic in his habits; he married twice, and gradually moved into larger houses. His literary friendships were not all of the first rate. He was esteemed by Johnson and patronised by Warburton, and was

fairly intimate with Young ; but Aaron Hill and Colley Cibber, who outdid each other in high-sauced compliment, were more likely to satisfy his nervous vanity. An extraordinary smugness pervades Richardson and his circle. It was chiefly women who swung the censer before him. The flatteries that he inhaled with such pleasure are hard to credit. But a Dutch correspondent quotes the saying of a clergyman about *Clarissa*. The original, unluckily lost, was in Latin, and the English runs :

> If very many parts of these letters were to be found in the Bible, they would be pointed out as manifest proofs of divine inspiration.

Richardson's extant correspondence is bulky, and is never likely to be printed in its entirety. Much of it is a smooth, endless, and oily stream of commonplace ; yet it is an essential part of his works, and has an artistic interest. It contains many discussions of his methods, and defences of his plots. The characters in his books are canvassed, taken to pieces, and praised or blamed, like real persons. The author stands before us like one of his own creations : the printer, with his double chin, his hand in his vest, and his dull but quick-moving grey eye. He takes out the hand, and wags a monitory finger at some admirer, blandly keeping her in order ; not, indeed, waving away the clouds of 'good strong thick stupefying incense-smoke,' but setting her right on some nice point of sensibility, and murmuring his own inimitable phrase—'if I know anything of the circumambaging sex . . .' His fame was still at its height when he died ; and even later, as the novel conquered new territory and as Fielding, not too soon, came into his own, Richardson remained, though a little the worse for wear, still a classic author. Towards the end of the next century he was again closely studied, and his works were reprinted. He will always be read by a few men, and by more women ; read for his own sake, and not merely for historical reasons.

IV

Richardson was a born epistoler, tale-teller, moraliser, and student of the female heart ; we might say that the boy was the uncle of the man. He told improving stories to his schoolfellows, and, at the age of thirteen, composed love-letters for a band of 'young women of taste and reading.' In 1741, two months after *Pamela*, he published, at the request of booksellers and as a pattern for 'country readers,' a hundred and seventy-three *Familiar Letters*[1] *on the Most Important Occasions*.

Some of the headings may be cited, to show Richardson at work in his studio, or kitchen. Most of the letters are concerned with courtship or marriage, or with the pitfalls that await the young. One 'shocking story,' the author notes, is 'fact in every circumstance,' and is thus entitled :

A young woman in town to her sister in the country, recounting her narrow escape from a snare laid for her on her first arrival, by a wicked procuress.

Such documents were to serve for the darker scenes in *Clarissa*. The young woman is almost hocussed, but a compassionate fellow-victim gets her free in time. Other themes are less alarming :

'To a rich widow lady with children, dissuading her from marrying a widower of meaner degree, who has children also.' . . . 'Recommending a wet-nurse.' . . . 'From a father to a daughter, against a frothy French lover.'

Many of the letters fall into pairs : the terms of consolation addressed to a widow may be easily adjusted for a widower ; a young lady may either encourage, or discourage, a suitor ; and the language, in either case, may be graded in severity, several drafts being provided. The same process is pleasantly applied to other sorts of business :

'To a person of note, in acknowledgment of great benefits received.' . . . 'Another, for favours not so high, but of a genuine nature.'

Again, an imaginary damsel (who is not so lively as Miss Howe) writes a series of descriptions of Westminster Abbey and other sights to a friend in the country. One epistle, supposed to come from a rural gentleman who has witnessed a public hanging, shows Richardson's gift and liking for sombre portraiture. We hear of the 'unconcern and carelessness' of the malefactors ; of the obscene noises drowning the exhortations of the bellman ; and of the 'populace haling and pulling the carcases,' to secure which certain persons have been 'sent by private surgeons.' This imaginary observer, who speaks the sentiments of Richardson, is of a different mind to George Selwyn, who attended executions as men do the first night of a play. We see the contrast between the shocked and the unshockable classes.

Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded, appeared in 1740 ; there was a fifth edition (still anonymous) in the next year, and if we inspect this we are some while before reaching the story. The title runs to ninety-one words ; there are more than thirty pages of self-

puffery, chiefly in the form of ecstatic letters from unknown persons to the 'editor'; and there is his own preface. Here he informs us that he can 'appeal from his own Passions (which have been uncommonly *moved* in perusing it [the book]) to the Passions of *every one* who shall read with Attention'; and he is told, in some unsigned verses, that 'Passion's ruffled Empire waits thy Will.' (Richardson's capitals, which he uses studiously, may for once be reproduced.) All this takes time; but Pamela's letters begin the ruffling process with little delay. She plunges into her tale; and the opening, relating the seemingly innocent overtures of her master 'Mr. B.,' is seen at once to be the work of a new artist in fiction. His long-winded, cloying didactics appear all too soon, and are never far off. But they suit Pamela, whose flow of sanctimonious remark is dammed neither by danger nor by safety. We are bidden to admire her from her lowly start in life, throughout her perilous course, up to her prosperous finish. If—what is inconceivable—Richardson could have let the story tell itself without making himself an accomplice in Pamela's moralities, the book might have been a classic. It is singular to think how a master of irony might have written it much as it stands, with an exactly opposite intention.

Even as it is, when Pamela pauses in her preaching and comes to incident, dialogue, and description, we feel that the English novel, if not truly established, is well in sight. Pamela is alive, or we should not still be discussing her. Critics have demurred to her age; Mrs. Jervis states it as fifteen—a precocious fifteen; but probably Richardson knew his world of the pantry. The praise that he has always received for the subtlety of his main conception is fairly earned. Pamela is from the first smitten, however prudently and virtuously, with her master; and the harder she is beset, the more plainly she lets out this secret herself—though not *to* herself. Her love, nevertheless, must be described as an intention rather than a passion. She commands our sympathy, or at least our admiration, while she is fighting; she has the rights of a trapped animal. But once she is safe, Pamela begins to be disconcerting. She yields skilfully in all but essentials; by a kind of emotional jiu-jitsu, she turns Mr. B.'s pressure against himself, edges him into the strangle-hold of matrimony, and weeps in gratitude for the gift of his hand. Mrs. Barbauld puts the point with her usual precision when she says that Pamela is 'the conscious possessor of a treasure which she is wisely resolved not to part with but for its just price.' And another lady critic [1] remarks, even more

ruthlessly, 'Pamela may be virtuous, but she is anything but pure-minded; and in this lies her security.' But neither the author nor his admirers felt these objections; and in fact such verdicts of Pamela's own sex, however well founded, are beside the mark. They only show that Pamela is too real for their liking. We must distinguish the complicity of the author in the moral that he proffers, from the excellence of his drawing. His motives for writing the book are mingled. He honestly feels it is his mission to warn and protect young women; he displays, in the process, a somewhat shoddy code of ethics; and, behind it all, there is the impulse of the artist.

In *Pamela*, as in *Clarissa*, there are some startling contrasts of style. One is the sententious and sentimental, which is very like Richardson's own, and which he often imputes to Pamela, more especially after she has won her preferment. Her usual diffuse, down-at-heel English is all in character, and she reveals herself in all her smallness, her adroitness, and her commonplace ambition. But another kind of writing came down to Richardson from Swift or Defoe; it is that of the ruthless realist, and is not commonplace at all. The pictures of Jewkes the bawd and Colbrand the Cerberus are bold enough for Hogarth; and one scene, but for its verbal decency and its conclusion, recalls a page of *La Terre*. Richardson could always hit hard when he was wrought up; and he saw the value of brutality as a foil to sentiment and preaching. Coleridge, in an often-quoted phrase, hit upon another feature which is already perceptible in *Pamela*: he speaks of the 'day-dreamy continuity' of the scene. Every tiny incident, every sentence in the talk, is linked to the next as in fine chain-armour. We shut the book, exclaim against the illusion, and are glad that we are now in the daylit world. With the poets, or with Cervantes, we also suffer the 'willing suspension of disbelief for the moment'; but we are sorry to awake. Defoe has a similar power of producing conviction; but he cares chiefly for externals, and the links in his chain are coarser than Richardson's. Any average passage of *Pamela* has this persuasive, irritating quality:

Said I, (for my heart was ready to break to see his grief; for it is a touching thing to see a man cry) Tell me the worst! Is my master coming? No, no, said he, and sobbed.—Well, said I, is there any news of my poor father and mother? How do they do?—I hope, well, said he; I know nothing to the contrary: There is no mishap, I hope, to Mrs. Jervis, or to Mr. Longman, or my fellow-servants? No—said he, poor man! with a long N - - - o, as if his heart would burst. Well, thank God then! said I. The man 's a fool, said Mrs.

Jewkes, I think; what ado is here! why, sure thou 'rt in love, John.

Nothing can be commoner, nothing more insipid; it is a servile idiom; but every shade is marked. It is varied with much dramatic skill; Mr. Williams, and John, and Robin are perfectly distinct. This broken but not inconsequent talk, with its exclamations, interruptions, and changes of the voice, is also found in Sterne; but he, the master-silversmith, wreathes the pattern with a mischievous whim, and decorates it with a learned humour, to which Richardson is a stranger. But *Pamela* succeeded at once, especially with the world of women. The daughters of Aaron Hill were 'quite filled and transported with the triumphs' of the heroine, and their sycophantic parent wrote that there was 'witchcraft in every page of it.' This was the common verdict; but the imitator, and also the mocker, were soon at work. A spurious sequel led Richardson to issue, in two volumes now unread, his own continuation. Pamela is now exhibited in her married and exalted state, and has become insupportably sententious. Soon came *Shamela* (1741), the rough parody which has been questionably fathered upon Fielding (see Ch. VII.); and, in 1742, the nicer commentary, in *Joseph Andrews*. But the effect of these cavils was at first slight. The public was athirst for a story of familiar life that should keep the feelings at high tension. There might be a Pamela[1] in any mansion; in fact, some one like her had existed. The resemblances to Marivaux' heroine in *La Vie de Marianne* (1731-41) are almost certainly accidental, and in any case do not go far. No literary origin for the story need be sought. Richardson had heard of a lovely young hostess, once a servant, who, after eluding her master by many 'innocent stratagems,' had become his lawful lady, shining in her new sphere of life. The queer ethics of the business were little remarked; nor was it seen that Pamela, to speak metaphysically, almost fulfils the Pure Idea of a minx.

V

The freshness of the letter-form, as employed for such a story, was also an attraction. The imaginary letters of real persons, as in Drayton's *Heroical Epistles*, were a recognised species. The imaginary letters of imaginary persons, as in the *Arcadia* and its endless progeny, were still better known. It remained to change the scene from Arcadia to middle-class life, and to let

the story consist wholly of letters. Their length, in an age of inordinate correspondence and dear postage, was nothing strange; but something more may be said of Richardson's 'epistolary manner of writing,' as he terms it, which is used in all his novels. The author speaks only in the guise of an 'editor,' who provides a preface, or a 'conclusion,' or footnotes that give references to and fro, or, again, the 'substance' of any letter that is omitted for reasons of space. Short portions of *Pamela* are given in direct narrative. The plot will thus be made tight; every filament can be tested; and the illusion of a 'history' (the word appears in each of the titles) will be sustained through many volumes. What documents can be more 'original' than letters which are dashed off in a heat? They give, says Mrs. Barbauld aptly, 'the feelings of the moment as the writers felt them *at* the moment.' In the 'postscript' to *Clarissa* the method is defended against objectors. Richardson tells us that he 'perhaps mistrusted his talents' for the 'usual narrative way of writing,' and quotes an eulogistic sentence (very ponderous and Gladstonian) from a French translator, who makes the best of the case for epistolary fiction:

> The minute particulars of events, the sentiments and conversations of the parties, are, upon this plan, exhibited with all the warmth and spirit that the passion supposed to be predominant at the very time could produce, and with all the distinguishing characteristics which memory can supply in a history of recent transactions.

The letter-form, as used by Richardson, has always amused the mockers of a later day. There is a system of Chinese boxes. The leading gentleman and lady write to their confidants; but in the double correspondence are inserted careful copies of other letters exchanged with third persons. These, again, sometimes write to one another direct: the hardened Mowbray to the repentant Belford, and so forth. And the problem arises of conveying the letters. Clarissa is imprisoned in her own house by her horrible family for refusing the impossible Mr. Solmes; but she may feed her hens in the garden, and she drops her reports through the fence into an improvised post-office. She is debarred from ink and paper, but has secret supplies. Also time has to be found for writing. It has been reckoned by the curious that Clarissa wrote on an average for eight hours a day; and, so we are told by Mr. Belford,

> there never was a woman so young who wrote so much and with such celerity. Her thoughts keeping pace, as I have seen, with her pen, she hardly ever stopped or hesitated; and very seldom blotted

out, or altered. It was a natural talent she was mistress of, among many other extraordinary ones.

And we have the testimony of Miss Howe, in the course of twenty-nine pages of panegyric :

the hand she wrote, for the neat and free cut of her letters (like her mind, solid, and above all *flourish*), for its fairness, evenness, and swiftness, distinguished her as much as the correctness of her orthography, and even punctuation, from the generality of her own sex.

We can well believe it. But Miss Howe, and Lovelace, and Belford, are just as facile ; and Miss Harriet Byron, in *Sir Charles Grandison*, rivals Clarissa herself.

Hence, in such a story, time goes slower than the clock and everything takes longer to report than to happen. The talk is set down, as though by a shorthand writer ; also every gesture and silence ; also the unseen part, all the thoughts of the actors at the time ; and also, and above all, the afterthoughts of the writer of the letter. All this enhances the illusion, at the cost of weariness. It is an abnormal method and one only suited to the mood which it exists in order to create. It is in substance that of two very different practitioners, Henry James and Proust ; and some writers are using it to-day. We are grateful, and must take of an artist what he gives ; but we go back with relief to Scott or Fielding. They too write at their leisure, but not in order to macerate the sentiment ; and they have humour, to keep their morality from cloying. Not that Richardson's first readers were tired ; indeed they could never have enough of him.

VI

And we too, once we grant him his subject and procedure, must praise his design. He said himself, ' I am a very irregular writer, can form no plan.' But his plan is always clear and skilful ; and in *Clarissa*,[1] *or the History of a Young Lady*, his most symmetrical book, it falls into acts like a play. There are four : the first ends with Clarissa's escape from home ; the next with the commission of the crime ; the third with her death ; and the last with that of Lovelace. A modern critic [2] justly speaks of the ' structural unity sedulously kept in view.' The first act is long, but in his ' postscript ' Richardson defends it on the ground that the durance of Clarissa in her home must be fully set forth in order to explain and excuse her innocent false step. She runs off in despair, trusting to the honour of

Lovelace. A better plea for lengthiness is found in the portraiture of the Harlowe family. Not exactly human figures, they have the reality of a bad consistent dream. Every variety is there of cruelty and fatuity; and they care for nothing but money. There is the callous jealous sister; the hectoring brother; the weak gouty father, to whom Clarissa pays feudal deference; the ineffectual uncles, and the insolent gaoler-maid; and the manservant who 'double-crosses' everybody. They close round Clarissa, trying to force the impossible Solmes upon her as a husband; and, above all, they talk. It is the talk that gets the story along, both now and afterwards.

The second act, where the tragedy culminates, is by far the most powerful. The plotting is flimsy; as one critic has said, the author is hard put to it to prevent Clarissa escaping the toils. But Lovelace and his gang, who now come to the fore, hold the attention. There is the stony brute Mowbray; Belton, the prey of a bad mistress, whose rake's progress comes to its due ending; and Belford, who is gradually horrified, quits Lovelace, aids Clarissa, and is at last named as her executor. Below is the underworld of procurers, bullies, agents, and prostitutes who impersonate fine ladies. Clarissa is taken to the bad house, their headquarters, a den of hyenas. Richardson invents for them a special language, which does not sound quite real; it might go down better on the stage. He uses it to set in relief the high-pitched style of the tragic actors; and after this, indeed, we rather welcome a little brutal directness. The physical descriptions of Madam Sinclair and her troop suggest a study of Hogarth. The horrors are multiplied in order to display, not only the whiteness of Clarissa, but her courage and diplomacy, exerted in vain.

The last two acts, though not less carefully built, are intolerably long; and their aim is chiefly to edify. There is one fresh incident. Pressure is put upon Clarissa, to marry her betrayer; but she refuses, fades, and dies. She takes an unconscionable time about it, and her verbosity sadly fritters away the pathos. New figures enter, the aunts and cousins of Lovelace, but they are faintly drawn. Then the moral is driven home. The Harlowes are, very improbably, struck with remorse. The full text of Clarissa's will is a formidable document; and to it are added the eleven letters written to be delivered after her death. Lovelace is killed, not ignominiously but in fair fight, by Colonel Morden, who shakes his hand in farewell. Miss Howe, the confidant, marries a long-suffering suitor. The Harlowes come to grief in various satisfactory ways.

The word *Lovelace*, bestowed by Richardson upon the language, is defined in the modern dictionary as an 'accomplished rake'; but this is only part of his conception. He saw that a mere seducer is of no interest; and he tries to make his hero a man of wit, reading, and imagination. In the course of several pages Lovelace quotes Virgil, Shakespeare, Congreve, Swift, *Cato*, and *Hudibras*. Also he dominates every company, and is thus described by an enemy, Miss Howe (herself one of the most living figures in the book, and an admirable, light-handed 'portrait of a lady'):

> So little of the fop; yet so elegant and rich in his dress; his person so specious; his air so intrepid; so much meaning and penetration in his face; so much gaiety, yet so little of the monkey; though a travelled gentleman, yet so little affectation; no mere toupet-man; but all manly; and his courage and wit, the one so known, the other so dreaded, you must think the *petits-maîtres* (of which there were four or five present) were most deplorably off in his company; and one grave gentleman observed to me, (pleased to see me shun him as I did) that the poet's observation was too true, that the generality of ladies were *rakes in their hearts*, or they could not be so much taken with a man who had so notorious a character.

Miss Howe came fresh from an interview between the villain and the four female relatives who had set upon him with reproaches. Some of his other dialogues, with the slow-witted Hickman, with the indecent women to whom he takes Clarissa, and with the decent ones to whom she repairs, are good comedy of a grim order. We begin to believe in Lovelace. But when he raves endlessly and rhetorically to Belford we suspect that he is not a man at all but a monster put together with many incantations. In vain is he constantly surprised into respect for his victim, and distracted when she is ill. Perhaps his worst remark is that he regrets to see 'this charming clock run down so low'; it is also one of the author's worst lapses. After her death he is in despair, but recovers his jauntiness, and is allowed to end more or less like a gentleman.

Clarissa herself has never, like Lovelace, become a type or proverb; but we see her clearly. In her 'pale crimson paduasoy' and in the 'Brussels mob-cap which a sky-blue ribbon illustrated,' she sits down to 'compose her angry passions at the harpsichord,' or to listen to 'the distant whootings of the bird of Minerva.' She sets to music an *Ode to Wisdom, by a Lady* (who was, in fact, Mrs. Elizabeth Carter), and adds that 'I have not been unhappy in my performance.' She is full of family piety, if capable of young-ladylike retort and self-defence; and

so far (whatever the author may wish us to think) she is unpromising. But her 'conditional kind of liking' for Lovelace is subtly shown, only to be quenched. It is not merely events that make her tragic; she has resource, and a steely power of resistance. Great skill is shown in making us credit this unfolding of her character. She never yields; she has in the end to be drugged. She keeps her dignity through all the absurdities of the story. Richardson, despite his flux of words and craze for continuations, never quite spoils Clarissa. The pathos, at moments, though not always when it is so intended, is great and genuine. It is not of the highest kind; but the passages that have really stirred the world, the lament of Priam or Alcestis, are after all few; and we know too well the countless substitutes.

VII

In the 'conclusion' to the book we are told why the author had resisted many appeals to spare Clarissa's life. The old Colley Cibber is reported (on the dubious word of Lætitia Pilkington) to have exclaimed that she must not die:

> G--d d—n him if she should; and that he should no longer believe Providence, or Eternal Wisdom, or Goodness, governed the world, if merit, innocence, and beauty were to be so destroyed.

The poet Young settled this question summarily in another way:

> Is it contrary to the common method of Providence, to permit the best to suffer most? No. When they do *so* suffer, does it not most deeply affect the human heart? Yes. And is it not your business to affect the human heart as deeply as you can? Yes.

Richardson's own plea is less simple. He quotes Aristotle (incorrectly) as saying that a good person may be exhibited in a drama as suffering beyond his deserts. But that is by the way; and Richardson argues that poetic justice has been in fact observed, and therewith Christian morality. For is not Clarissa blessed in the next world? 'I could not think,' he remarks elsewhere, 'of leaving my heroine short of heaven.' As for the rest, Lovelace, the Harlowes, Miss Howe, are they not all accurately punished and rewarded in *this* world? Richardson, in disposing of his villain, has not the courage of Bunyan, whose Mr. Badman dies in prosperity but is obviously expected in hell. But his whole argument is an afterthought, or beside the mark. He was too good a craftsman to stultify a long-arranged effect, of which death was the only outcome.

This becomes ever clearer as Clarissa, tangled in circumstance, passes into the clutches of evil, suffers indignities and agonies, and goes unconquered in will to her doom. Richardson need only have firmly asserted his dramatic purpose. 'After all,' he once wrote in a flash of insight, 'it is the execution must either acquit or condemn me.' No less workmanlike is his answer to the sentimentalists who wished to see Lovelace reformed and married to his victim. Such a story, he rejoins, would only have been a second version of *Pamela*.

This strength of construction does not exclude a singular poverty of ideas. From Richardson's books we should hardly know that ideas existed in this world. His characters have none, and the chorus has nothing real to say. There is nothing *round* such a work as *Clarissa* but a ring-fence of platitudes; and it is this which separates Richardson from the greater tragic writers. Fewer tears have been shed over *Le Père Goriot* or *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*; but each of these histories suggests something bigger than itself—a ruthless society, or a neutral universe, full of other such disasters that remain untold. We have still to ask why *Clarissa* was so great a literary event, and the probable answer has been suggested already. Apart from its power, the book came at the right moment. It satisfied the craving, which was met in a smaller way by the 'domestic tragedies' of Lillo, for a lacerating drama, set in prosaic surroundings and also conveyed in the 'language of the heart.' Orthodox morality and piety were not alarmed. A minor attraction, it is fair to suggest, was the morbid interest in crime. Here were eight volumes, safely steeped in virtuous sentiment, and all about an offence which was then capital, and which was led up to, and led away from, and interminably (let me risk the word) pawed over. The subject was perfectly legitimate, if only the artist could rise to it; but it may be doubted whether Richardson, for all his genius, was the man to 'cleanse away' the passions of 'pity and terror.' Perhaps this is merely to say that though not a great poet he took the risks of one. The power of his story to move us is not yet, like that of his *contemporary*, 'Ossian,' outworn. In any case, he was not in the least exhausted; and in his third book, which is in many ways his ablest, and is properly speaking a comedy of manners, his problem was different.

VIII

He informs us that he had been 'teased by a dozen ladies of note and of virtue to give them a good man'; and he wrote the

History of Sir Charles Grandison to meet their wishes. He produced a Georgian version of that old ideal of the 'courtier,' which had come down through many channels, and in particular through heroic plays and romances. Sir Charles has all the arts and graces; he is a perfect Christian, and a perfect, though unspotted, man of the world. He is handsome, and above all he has, or rather he *is*, the grand manner. The social stratum is higher than in *Clarissa*; and it is not Richardson's own. It is doubtful whether Chesterfield would have 'passed' Sir Charles. Certainly he would have mocked at his abnormal 'delicacy'—a word so frequent in the book that we echo the lively Miss Grandison, who somewhat relieves the general atmosphere of priggery:

> Let me tell you there is more indelicacy in delicacy, than you *very* delicate people are aware of.

Sir Charles is literally invulnerable. He objects to duelling on principle, except in defence of his person or his honour. Accordingly he is, like Hamlet, a fencer—but a better one than Hamlet. He has a useful knack, which prevents bloodshed, of disarming his opponent at the first exchange. He can also do very hard business in the interests of virtue. An inveterate meddler and matchmaker, he knows what is best for everybody. He protects his little ward Emily against a dubious mother and a raffish admirer. He manifests a 'tender regard toward the two sons of Mrs. Oldham, the penitent mistress of his father Sir Thomas.' As a negotiator he is now playful, now blandly oppressive. He marries off Charlotte, very slowly, to a Lord G——. He is equally successful with Lord W——, his scampish uncle—usually an impervious kind of relative. One interview is most characteristic. He persuades Lord W—— to pension off his mistress; but there is a debate over the allowance. The uncle proposes £250; the nephew stands out for £350, and at last offers to supply the odd £100 out of his own pocket. Then Lord W—— capitulates:

> And is it *thus*, is it *thus*, you subdue me ?—— . . . Jesus! How shall I bear my own littleness ?

At last he strikes a bargain, offering £1000 in full settlement, to be paid in instalments over a period of ten years; and, Lord W—— adds, 'if she dies sooner, the difference is yours.' Later Sir Charles (who is his uncle's heir, and is acting against his own interest) finds a young wife for the now reformed nobleman; and Lord W —— is left exclaiming, 'I shall, for my own

sake, adore my sister's son.' We are far indeed from Major Pendennis.

Grandison does not appear too soon ; ' he must be seen,' says his creator, ' to enter with an *éclat*.' He enters as the rescuer of the heroine Miss Harriet Byron from one Sir Hargraves Pollexfen, who is a kind of fourth-rate Lovelace. Sir Charles collared the villain, and ' with a jerk, and a kind of twist, laid him under the hind wheel of his chariot.' Harriet, we know already, has, like Sir Charles himself, many alternative admirers ; who, in both cases, have to be cleared out of the way. Most of *her* suitors subside at once when Sir Charles appears ; but *his* are much less tractable, and the plot turns on their natural reluctance to resign him. He has the habit, we are told, of ' involuntarily gaining their affections,' and also of ' tracing the progress ' of those affections. ' How can I forbear,' writes Richardson, ' making many women desire a good man ? ' He does not forbear ; but the intricate story that follows I must only outline.

Harriet has two Italian rivals ; and one of them, Olivia, in desperation tries to poniard Sir Charles. He has to tell her that he cannot return her love ; and he describes himself in the remark : ' It *was* a mortification to me, as much for her sake as my own.' But Olivia gives little trouble compared with Clementina della Porretta. This lady, who belongs to a noble and rigidly Catholic family, protracts the suspense of Harriet through many volumes. One of her brothers is Jeronymo, Sir Charles's friend ; another is a general, and a third is a bishop. Sir Charles teaches her English, through the medium of ' our Milton ' ; and he is slow to perceive her affection. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's comment is to the point :

> It was impossible a discerning man should not see her passion early enough to check it, if he had really designed it.

It is plain that the Porrettas would welcome such an alliance, if only Sir Charles would change his faith ; and he drifts into the false position of appearing to be willing to marry, *if* that condition can be waived. A staunch Protestant, he does not dream of accepting it ; but, practical as ever, he offers handsome alternative terms,[1] in the articles of ' residence ' and of possible children. But there is a deadlock, and Clementina falls into a melancholy. At this point Sir Charles comes home, to find that Harriet would be the ideal Lady Grandison, and that she is a hopeless victim. She supposes that he has only a ' platonic ' regard for her. He is hypothetically bound to Clementina. How is he to come out of the tangle as a man of ' true honour '

who exists in order to ' behave uniformly well through a variety of trying scenes ' ?

The author seems to feel that his hero is on doubtful ground. Plainly, he should have kept away from Harriet until the Italian affair was settled. But he is young and human after all, and not incapable of ' pride and passion.' This is a good reason dramatically, but not quite the same as ' behaving uniformly well.' However, Sir Charles goes back to Italy, and Harriet sees the letters that he writes home to his confidant, Dr. Bartlett. The parleys are resumed, at prodigious length ; the family councils are more and more portentous. At last Clementina cuts the knot. Broken-hearted, she refuses to wed a heretic. This is the only difficulty in his life that Sir Charles does not solve himself. He comes home again, and marries Harriet with the deliberation of a minuet. The preparations are described with maudlin prolixity. Harriet can only wish that ' all the profligates in the parish ' might attend the service, to be ' edified by his cheerful piety ' ; and we hear of the bridegroom's ' noble behaviour in the vestry.' The bride weeps, and he observes, ' Check not the kindly gush ! ' We have a glimpse of his married life ; and Lady Grandison, in a last letter to her grandmother, relates how well her lord had presided over the deathbed of Sir Hargraves Pollexfen. The inveterate Sir Charles also helps to settle the affairs of Clementina, whom he wishes to be happy ; and we are left in a delicate doubt whether she may not in the end entertain the idea of considering the advantages of listening to the addresses of the Count of Belvedere. The brothers are overpowered by Grandison's behaviour :

> I was conscious of a superiority *in this instance*. . . . The bishop embraced me. ' Your moderation thus exerted,' he said, ' must ever make you triumph. O Grandison ! You are a prince of the Almighty's creation ! ' The noble Jeronymo dried his eyes.

The most living figure in the book is Harriet, who directly or indirectly reports much of the story. She babbles on paper at merciless length, and avows her state of mind to everybody except Sir Charles. She thinks of nothing but marriages ; lectures the skittish Miss Grandison, and abounds in vinegary advice couched in affectionate language. She is not attractive, but she paints herself to perfection ; and our chief complaint, as in the case of Pamela, is that the author worships her. It must be admitted that she is hard driven ; but we do not much care when she is at last rewarded.

IX

A curious passage in *Sir Charles Grandison* throws light on one cause of Richardson's success. The scene of the story, he tells us elsewhere, is laid in his own day, namely, about the middle of the century. Thus Mrs. Shirley, the grandmother of Lady Grandison (born Harriet Byron), must be speaking of the latter age of Dryden when she thus moralises :

> The reading in fashion, when I was young, was romances. You, my children, have, in that respect, fallen into happier days. The present age is greatly obliged to the authors of the Spectators. But till I became acquainted with my dear Mrs. Eggleton, which was about my sixteenth year, I was overrun with the absurdities of that unnatural kind of writing.
>
> And how long, madam, did they hold ?
>
> Not till I was quite twenty. The good lady cured me of so false a taste ; but, till she did, I had very high ideas of first impression ; of eternal constancy ; of love raised to a pitch of idolatry. In these dispositions, not more than nineteen, was my dear Mr. Shirley proposed to me, as a person whose character was faultless ; his offers advantageous. I had seen him in company two or three times, and looked upon him merely as a good sort of a man ; a sensible man . . . But what was a good sort of man to an Oroondates ?

This Mrs. Eggleton, the old lady proceeds, had once caught her reading the *Princess of Cleves*, and fascinated by the qualities of the ' Duke de Nemours ' ; but had at once laughed her out of the craze. The masterpiece of Mme de la Fayette, needless to say, is a very different work from the peccant ' romances ' ; but Mrs. Eggleton judged that it was ' written with dangerous elegance.' So Mr. Shirley had been accepted, on grounds of common sense, and Mrs. Shirley had never repented her action ; seeing that ' the happiness of human life, my dears, is at best but comparative.' It might be Johnson speaking. In spite, Richardson seems to say, of our floods of sensibility, let us be reasonable above all things ; and above all let us be business-like in the chief affair of life. Solid qualities, like a good marriage settlement, endure. This hard prosaic rationality is deep in Richardson, perhaps deeper than his sentiment ; it certainly told with his public, and gives a not unneeded stiffening to his stories.

Of course, it is not what he professes. In the preface to *Grandison* he speaks as if a moral trilogy had been part of his ' first design.' Probably the idea was an afterthought, and the

success of each venture had prompted the next. But when he had finished he saw them all as an edifying series. Mr. B. was a libertine reclaimed; Clarissa 'rejoiced in the approach of a happy eternity'; Grandison 'behaved uniformly well.' In this spirit Richardson, by way of epilogue, published a *Collection*[1] *of Moral and Instructive Sentiments* (1755) culled from his three books under alphabetical headings. The aim was to provide a 'useful theory for the youth of both sexes.' If you would know what to think and say concerning 'remorse,' or 'revenge,' or 'fondness,' or 'wit,' or 'vapours,' turn to the right page. Subjects are included as wide as 'human nature,' and as mysterious as 'deviation.' Reference is made both to the edition in seven volumes, and to the larger one in eight:

T.

Tears. 'Beauty in tears, is beauty heightened.' iv. 190 [v. 19]. . . . *See* Beauty. Cruelty. Eyes. Heart.

And, on turning to 'Eyes,' we are bidden '*see* Tears'; and tears, it is known, superabound in the novel of sensibility. Most of the maxims are uttered by the hero or heroine, through whom Richardson speaks ventriloquially. What disconcerts us is the contrast between the flatness of the comment and the frequent power of the dialogue; as though the author were only himself when he forgot himself and his code, and let his imagination, or daemon, play freely.

Richardson has also to contend against his own English,[2] which does not bear very close inspection. It has not the stamp of scholarship, or at least of rightness, which in different ways marks that of Fielding, Smollett, and Sterne. He uses forms like *charminger*, *willingest*, *bursted*, *chidded*; not only his homely speakers, but his gentry, are deficient in style. His own letters leave the same impression. It might be hard to find a sentence in his works that delights the ear. The acute Lady Louisa Stuart[3] noticed that

> if Richardson's inelegancies disturb us less than they did Lady Mary Wortley, it is because we take for old-fashioned much that our fathers and mothers knew to be vulgar, or even ridiculous.

As a man, Richardson is hardly refreshing. We readily associate genius with passion, but not so readily with a passion for the obvious. Not that Nature cares in how queer a vessel she lodges her creative spark. All these drawbacks fail to smother it, or to conceal the essential gifts of plotting, of situation, of portraiture, and of pathos.

The history of Richardson's fame and influence [1] at home and abroad has not yet been fully written, and cannot even be sketched here. It extended to France, Germany, and Italy. His books were dramatised, and were the origin of many stories, the theme of many eulogies. Both Goethe and Diderot, to go no further, bore witness to his power. Along with 'Ossian' and with Sterne, he was for a time the representative overseas of the British genius; and there, as in England, he seemed to speak, in an age dissatisfied with reasoning and formal codes, for the claims of the heart and imagination. Such a renaissance of feeling naturally produced endless *sensiblerie* and false writing; and, in this matter, there was no greater sinner than Richardson; except indeed his student Rousseau, whose *Nouvelle Héloïse* 'broadcast' the sentiment of *Clarissa*. But these things were transient, though long-lived, and died at last of their own excess. They were not the real phenomenon, which may be described as the effort of human nature to regain its poise, and to repair a part of itself which had been on starvation diet. The discipline of hard sense and reason was going too far, and the sensitive and passionate element rose up against it. This may seem a large text to be suggested by a writer like Richardson, with all his absurdities; yet he played no small part in announcing and hastening the change. The course of his reputation in England will be better seen when compared with that of Fielding, his great competitor.

CHAPTER VII

FIELDING AND SMOLLETT

I

Burke, an Irishman, spoke of the 'ancient, inbred integrity, piety, good nature, and good humour of the English people'; and the words suit Henry Fielding [1] and his personages. The stock has not much altered in spite of the industrial revolution, and Romance, and the march of intellect; and this is one reason why Fielding's colours remain fresh. It was Sir Walter Scott who said of him:

> The persons of the story live in England, travel in England, quarrel and fight in England; and scarce an incident occurs, without it being marked by something which could not well have happened in any other country.

Fielding is also true to life in a larger way. His invented world has well-marked boundaries, both socially and spiritually. It scarcely touches the circles of Boswell, of Walpole, or of Sterne; and we do not expect it to illustrate the 'renascence of wonder.' But it is wide, and, above all, it preserves the real proportions of good and evil as we find them intermixed in mankind. Fielding sits there, in the words of his epitaph *suum cuique tribuens*, in a most unaffected attitude. He watches the play without condescension, if always a little apart. His irony is impartial, is never sentimentalised, and, except in *Jonathan Wild*, is always perfectly humane. It is not, like that of his master Swift, the desperate irony of a man who has indeed a dream of a reasonable planet, but has no hope that it can be found. Nor is he, like some novelists of great power, Meredith and Tolstoy, too hard and severe for human nature. He could not once attain to or express his philosophy; he had, like Scott, to serve a long apprenticeship before he found his true line, and then to find it almost by an accident. Fielding (1707-1754) was thirty-four when he published *Joseph Andrews*. Like Scott, he was a man of birth and breeding; he is always a gentleman, even when describing scenes of uproar. He has a grand manner that is

denied to Richardson, Smollett, or Sterne ; also no little scholarship and reading, which he is proud of and likes to parade pleasantly.

He came from the West Country ; and the view from Mr. Allworthy's seat, Paradise Hall, is said to be visible from Tor Hill.[1] Tom Jones wanders along the Severn Valley, down to Gloucester ; and this noble tract of country is the heart of Fielding's England. His boyhood is like an episode in his stories. Family feuds were waged over the control of his person ; and at eighteen he seems to have tried to elope with an heiress. Having learnt Latin at Eton, he put some of Juvenal's satire against women into burlesque rhymes. His family lost their fortune ; he spent an interval at Leyden University, where he is thought to have read more Latin ; and he went to London and started as a dramatist. During ten years Fielding produced some six-and-twenty comedies, squibs, farces, and entertainments, and wasted time in various playhouse wrangles. He married Charlotte Cradock, who is the ' Celia ' of his youthful rhymes and is said to be the original of Sophia Western. Several of the plays were successful ; but their political allusions became too audacious. Fielding was fast becoming satirist-in-ordinary to the party of Lyttelton and Chesterfield. Walpole's Licensing Act of 1737 for a time drove him from the theatre. The drama had hampered his talent, and we must be duly grateful to Walpole. In 1740 Fielding was called to the bar, a step that left traces on his art as well as affecting his career. Meantime, having to live by his pen, he turned to the periodical essay ; the first of his ventures was the *Champion* (1739-41). But his work up to 1742 discovers more of his tastes and opinions than of his genius.

Now, as the world knows, he accepted the provocation offered by the sentiment of *Pamela*. He was possibly the author of *Shamela* (1741) ; and in the next year he produced the *History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews, and of his Friend Mr. Abraham Adams* (1742). For the rest of his life—only twelve years—Fielding's record reminds us in one respect of Goldsmith's. He published a mass of transient work, which we read rather because it is his than because it is very good ; and also, unspoilt by all that daily industry, he wrote his masterpieces. In 1743 came out the *Miscellanies*, which include the Lucianic *Journey from this World to the Next* and the Swiftian *History of the Life of the late Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great*. Probably these works were written before *Joseph Andrews*. Then for a time his talent seemed to lie fallow. He made some more

comedies, but was much preoccupied with politics. The *True Patriot* (1745-6) and the *Jacobite's Journal* (1747-8) have significant dates and titles. Yet beneath all this journalism the artist was at work.

The *History of Tom Jones, a Foundling* (1749), was at once successful, running through several editions in the author's lifetime and receiving his last revision. Meantime, about the year 1744, Fielding had lost his wife ; and three years later had married her maid Mary Daniel, who was to figure so bravely in the *Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon*. But he now had a settled position in the world. Through his political friends he received a modest preferment in the law. In 1748 he was made Justice of the Peace for Westminster and Middlesex. One result of Fielding's energy and capacity in his office was a sheaf of legal, or rather what would now be called sociological, writings. The most important was the *Enquiry into the Causes of the late Increase of Robbers* (1751) ; another was an elaborate *Proposal* for the improvement of the Poor Laws. He also wrote tracts on the cases of Bosavern Penlez, an executed rioter, and of Elizabeth Canning, the girl who alleged that she had been mysteriously robbed and kidnapped. These works are best studied by the side of *Jonathan Wild*, which was reissued in 1754 with many changes. *Amelia* (1751) was Fielding's last and gentlest story. His activities during his last years were gallant and almost feverish. Weakened in health, he managed to edit, and largely to write, the most interesting of his periodicals, the *Covent Garden Journal* (1752). He drafted a hostile commentary, of which a part remains, on the newly-published heresies of Bolingbroke. He showed great vigour in dispersing a band of London ruffians. But he was breaking fast ; he had to abandon Bow Street and go south in the vain hope of recovery. The *Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon* was kept during the trip, revised after his settlement at Junqueira, and published in 1755 after his death.

II

Fielding's plays were written fast and are forgotten on the stage ; but they are often good reading, and they have their place in the history of the drama (Ch. IX.). In 1728 Congreve was still alive ; his last comedy had appeared in 1700, but he had not outlived his prestige. The tradition of Vanbrugh and Farquhar was strong, despite the sentimental plays of Steele. It was natural for a beginner to study in the school of mazy plot

and witty dialogue. Fielding's first piece, *Love in Several Masques* (1728), won the good word of his kinswoman Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. Gay too was at the height of his vogue, and Fielding turned out some sketchy comic operettas. He also watched the humours of the town ; and the *Author's Farce* (1730) is a brisk exhibition of the small miseries of playwrights. Their disputes with landladies, their rebuffs by the booksellers, and their woes during rehearsals, are presented with fellow-feeling ; and there is many a flash of Fielding's native gaiety. The young Marplay (who is Theophilus, the son of Colley Cibber) thus laments the fate of his drama, in a scene added in 1734 :

. . . if any play could have made them ashamed to damn it, mine must. It was all over plot. It would have made half a dozen novels : nor was it crammed with a pack of wit-traps, like Congreve and Wycherly, where every one knows when the joke was coming. I defy the sharpest critick of them all to have known when any jokes of mine were coming. The dialogue was plain, easy, and natural, and not one single joke in it from the beginning to the end : besides, sir, there was one scene of tender melancholy conversation—enough to have melted a heart of stone ; and yet they damned it—and they damned themselves ; for they shall have no more of mine.

Witmore. Take pity on the town, sir.

Comedy, ever casting about for fresh victims, was not likely to overlook her pompous sister, Tragedy. About sixty years before, Dryden and his friends had suffered for their heroic plays ; but since the *Rehearsal* there had been no very remarkable burlesque. Tragedy, in the meantime, at once fertile and degenerate (Ch. XI.), was in 1730 more popular than ever, and richer in absurdity. Fielding, seeing that the time was ripe, steeped himself not only in Dryden, Lee, and Otway, who were still familiar to playgoers, but in Banks and Thomson, in Addison and Rowe. For such labours he deserved his revenge, and fairly earned his success. *Tom Thumb*,[1] *a Tragedy* (1730), was at once the rage ; and in its enlarged and altered form, *The Tragedy of Tragedies, or The Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great* (1731), it was not less acceptable, and was much imitated. It was now adorned with learned notes giving the texts and sources. The notes are thought to be a parody of the Dutch commentator Burmann, whom Fielding had heard discoursing at Leyden. *Tom Thumb*, further, is given out as an old play, from which the authors cited in the notes had stolen their quotations. Fielding also provides a preface written in the manner of Martinus Scriblerus. He is youthfully irreverent

towards small authors and great ; and an echo of his mockery is heard in *Tom Jones*, where he conveys the phrase 'giant honour' from the 'gigantic poet Lee.'

Tom Thumb is a careful travesty, and was a worthy model for the author of the *Critic*. Yet it is a curious question why Sheridan's piece can still be performed, while its predecessor is not heard of on the stage. We can laugh at Tilburina and Sir Walter Raleigh, but not so much at Huncamunca the daughter of King Arthur, or at her suitor Lord Grizzle perforating the ghost of Tom Thumb. Fielding, for all his vivacity, shows his reading somewhat painfully ; Sheridan has a finished wit which dispenses us from knowing his long-deceased originals.

It would be tedious to describe all Fielding's other dramas. His comic stage abounds in stock figures, in young pedants and elderly rakes, in forward dames who anticipate Lady Booby, and in corrupt justices who are faint sketches of Mr. Thrasher. One character, not to be found in his novels, is confessedly 'taken from Plautus and Molière.' The *Miser* (1733), which was praised by Voltaire, is a deft adaptation and sometimes a literal rendering of *L'Avare* ; and at one point at least it betters the original. The coquette Mariana is a gay invention of Fielding's ; and the finale is more natural than Molière's. Hence, as a French scholar has noted, the pivot [1] of the play is changed ; it is no longer the study of a vicious 'humour,' but an intrigue at the expense of an avaricious old hunks. Fielding pays no mere lip-service to Molière ; he uses him expertly and respectfully, and does not, like Shadwell and others, degrade or defile him. Already, in the *Mock Doctor*, he had drawn upon *Le Médecin malgré lui*. It was a good training for a future master of comic dialogue. But *Don Quixote in England* (1734) is a poor tribute to Cervantes, and retains few sparkles of his wisdom or wit. It is chiefly noteworthy for some lively electioneering humours, and for Fielding's hunting-song, 'The dusky night rides down the sky,' which is his nearest approach to poetry.

In *Pasquin* (1736), the best of his original plays, Fielding shows himself more independent of his models ; and here again Sheridan is in his debt. There is a 'rehearsal' of two distinct pieces ; and the comments of Fustian on Trapwit's comedy the *Election*, and of Sneerwell on Fustian's 'tragedy' the *Life and Death of Common Sense*, are a lively forecast of Sneer's ejaculations in the *Critic*. The election scenes, with their competition in bribery, are excellent satire ; and Common Sense jeers at all kinds of incoherent and farcical entertainment. Fielding, it must be said, is here to some extent judged out of his own

mouth. In the successor to *Pasquin*, the *Historical Register for the Year 1736*, the commodity of 'interest at court' is put up to auction, and Walpole is once more mocked openly. The sequel, and possibly the consequence, of these and other such sallies, was the Licensing Act. Fielding's other plays are of little account; and in the prologue to one of the last, the *Wedding Day*, written early but acted in 1743, Macklin informs the author that he had 'better have stuck to honest Abram Adams.' The drama, no doubt, had trained him in dialogue and in the art of construction; but, as Sir Walter Scott with his usual wisdom remarks, the canons of the stage and of the novel are different. Fielding had to unlearn some of the lessons of the footlights. His leisurely irony could not be the fruit of hand-to-mouth production. He required the wide and populous spaces of the novel. Also he must be free from the feuds with Colley Cibber, Rich, and many others, in which he was too long entangled. These frays have been fully described by the biographers, but they tell us nothing of Fielding's immortal part. His journalistic enterprises deserve more notice.

III

Literary cockfights that amuse us no longer are frequent in his first periodical, the *Champion*, which has been fitly called 'a cross between the *Tatler* or the *Spectator* and the *Grub Street Journal*.' Many of Fielding's articles, and of those by his partner James Ralph, have been identified. The machinery is a rather clumsy variant on a familiar kind. Captain Hercules Vinegar and his ponderous family are little more than mouthpieces of the author. Colley Cibber is much derided, and by no means fairly, for his *Apology* (1740); whatever the failings of the vain old actor, his book is better reading than most of the *Champion*, and has long survived it. Fielding's hostility, which is not worthy of him, was to reappear even in *Tom Jones*. But there is more attractive matter than this. Walpole and the ministry, now in sight of their fall, are assaulted and reviled. The deists are lectured, and are informed that their 'natural religion' leaves mankind no inducement to good behaviour. All this is the work of a fierce if honest partisan; the judicial calm of the novels might seem to be far distant; and yet *Joseph Andrews* must have now been (1739-41) on the stocks. None the less, many of Fielding's happier gifts, and something of his deeper mind, can already be discerned. His peculiar humour is already at play; and the dust and grime of Grub

Street, though we must regret that they touched him, could not long stick to him. He praises good nature, the nurse of the virtues, and specifies it as ' a delight in the happiness of mankind and a concern at their misery ' ; but he adds, characteristically, that ' to bring a real and great criminal to justice is perhaps the best-natured office we can perform to society.' In the novels, again, there are a score of playful references to the pagan, or medieval, goddess Fortune ; she was to play tricks upon Jones in the Upton Inn or the Bond Street lodging. Fielding himself had been flung about by her, and in one of his moods he is inclined to think her supreme ; and already, in the *Champion*, he exclaims that ' human life appears to me to resemble the game of hazard, much more than that of chess.' But this is only a mood ; and on the whole he thinks the world may prove to be good and rational, if only we fight to make it so. One of the weapons in such a warfare is moral satire ; and he sets out to practise it himself, like his friend ' the ingenious Mr. Hogarth,' whom he ' esteems as one of the most useful satirists any age hath produced.' We find Hogarth leaving his traces on the art as well as on the temper of the novels.

A medley somewhat similar is found in the *True Patriot*, which Fielding conducted during and after the rebellion (1745-6) ; but its chief aim is political. When the enemy has reached Derby, Parson Adams is revived, to preach to the Londoners on the sins which had brought this judgment upon them. Fielding too, when speaking in person, takes a fervidly Whig and patriotic line. But such writing, like most political journalism, is to be judged as a form of action rather than of art. The same must be said of the next venture, the *Jacobite's Journal* (1747-8), which is conducted by ' John Trott-Plaid, Esq.,' a caricature of the ' die-hard ' Jacobite.

The last of Fielding's periodicals, the *Covent Garden Journal*,[1] ' by Sir Alexander Drawcansir, Knt., Censor of Great Britain,' is still cut to the old, weatherworn pattern ; but his own contributions, written in the fullness of his powers and just after the issue of *Amelia*, throw light on his literary models, and also on his public enthusiasms. Throughout the pages there blows the breath of his generous disgust and dismay at the abuses of the time, legal, social, and economic. There are papers on the poor laws, on foundling hospitals, on prostitution ; the raillery of the deist and the sceptic is renewed ; and there is an ample display of Fielding's learning. The English essay was hardly to be quit of the Greeks and Romans until the time of Lamb and Hazlitt. The allusions in the *Covent Garden Journal* range lightly from the

Cardinal de Retz to Ariosto, and from Longinus to Locke. There are tributes, as before, to Cervantes, Swift, and Hogarth; and especially to Lucian, on whom Fielding expressly states that he formed his own satiric style. He had in fact planned a translation of Lucian, which came to nothing, in conjunction with William Young, who is the traditional model for Parson Adams; and he did make, with the same partner, a version of Aristophanes' *Plutus*. All this gives a distinct picture of Fielding, infirm in health, laden with professional work, flinging off tracts and essays in his leisure moments, and distracted by small disputes; but reading hungrily all the while, refreshing himself with classic comedy, and hot with a passion for healing the open sores of London. The artist, no doubt, is somewhat submerged; but he is once more to reappear, and to write his *Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon*.

IV

Fielding's books are deeply coloured by two of his acquirements. One of these is his literary culture; the other is his experience in the law. His library [1] would have done credit to a professional scholar. Some have found his habit of quoting and allusion ostentatious; but we have only to open Johnson or Gibbon to see that it was the habit of the time and an accomplishment expected of a gentleman. Fielding's shelves were stocked with the classics and with legal and modern literature. He is not erudite; like the poets, he reads for what is needful to his purpose, and for pleasure. But he has the old Renaissance habit of referring to the ancients as a school of wisdom and expression. He constantly cites Horace,[2] whom he regards as his master-counsellor and as the surest of critics. But he does not take his lore too seriously, and often uses Virgil or Ovid in order to burlesque the heroic style. This, says Scott rather severely,

> is a vein of pleasantry which is soon wrought out, and which Fielding has employed so often as to expose him to the charge of pedantry.

Yet who would sacrifice the mock invocations and similes and the epic combats in *Tom Jones*? Such devices had been used by Swift, Butler, and meaner hands; but Fielding manages to enliven them. And so with the language of the schools, which comes into his mind when Bridget listens at the hole in Allworthy's door while he lectures Jenny Jones:

> She had on such occasions the advantage of concealing her blushes from the eyes of men; and *De non apparentibus, et non existentibus*,

eadem est ratio,—in English, 'When a woman is not seen to blush, she doth not blush at all.'

He also draws freely on the English poets, and illustrates the charms of Sophia from Donne and Suckling. Tom Jones himself, though not a man of books, has somehow memorised in honour of his mistress the best four lines in *Venice Preserved*, and repeats them to the landlady of the second inn upon the Gloucester Road. I will not go on, seeing that some seventy profane authors, ancient and modern, are mentioned in *Tom Jones* alone. A broader result of these studies is seen in the conception of the shapely 'prose epic,' with its books, episodes, and invocations.

Fielding's conversance with law and crime is of a grimmer kind than Scott's and more professional than that of Balzac or Dickens. All four writers have woven this black thread into their fabrics. Fielding, perhaps, is too much tempted into indignant sallies and digressions against his imaginary miscreants. But his justices, attorneys, gaolers, bailiffs, thieves, and receivers are all living men, and they stand the crucial test of dialogue. His knowledge of the lawless world is shown with disconcerting power in that unpopular masterpiece, *Jonathan Wild*.[1] The career of the arch-robber, receiver, and police agent was still well remembered. Wild had suffered at Tyburn in 1725, and his story had been told, in literal fashion, by Defoe. Fielding describes 'such actions as he might have performed, or would, or should have performed,' and in so doing imitates the gravity, and rivals the irony, of Swift. But after all he is not Swift, and does not think that men are Yahoos. He is careful to say that goodness exists, and that he assails not true greatness but the 'bombast' counterfeit that often rules the world. Wild is a fellow of those 'great men,' 'prigs' on an imperial scale, Caesar and Alexander, whose small stray virtues are seen by historians out of all proportion on the background of their infamy. This too simple view of human affairs was encouraged by the spectacle of Georgian politics. In the first edition (1743) there is many a lash at Walpole, who seemed another instance of spurious and fallen greatness. In 1754, when the allusions would have fallen flat, they are toned down. The language is also minutely revised, and some surplusage cut away. But the main idea comes out all the more sharply, and the lowering, even terrible, atmosphere remains.

Wild is the shining example of 'greatness' and also the spokesman of the cult. He solemnly argues to the Count La Ruse that the humble 'prig' is more serenely happy than the

statesman. His diabolism in word and deed is mercilessly worked out. His conversations with his spouse, a worthy mate, touch the heights of sardonic comedy. His talk in Newgate with the 'ordinary,' or chaplain—who would not drink wine with an atheist, but only punch—is in the same strain. Fielding in one way somewhat defeats his effect. He feels the risk of monotony; but he only increases it by introducing the virtuous Heartfree, who is made happy after being long tormented and bedevilled. Heartfree is a lay figure, foolishly good. Mrs. Heartfree is more real; for the irony accompanies her even to Africa, where she is exposed to the overtures not only of a 'hermit' but of a 'coloured chief magistrate.' The black is the more decent of the two; for in *his* country, 'as it is no shame for women here to consent at the first proposal, so they never receive a second'; and after one rebuff he lets the lady be. It is not certain when *Jonathan Wild* was composed; it was probably before *Joseph Andrews*. Fielding, we may think, was unlikely to relapse from regular fiction into satiric parable, or to go back from Adams to Heartfree. To the same uncertain period belongs the *Journey from This World to the Next*. Some of Fielding's easiest, and also some of his heaviest, satire can be found in this fantasia. The humours of the stage-coach faring to the shades are as lively as those of the London road; and the 'female spirit,' who answers 'screwing up her mouth,' is own sister to the Mrs. Graveairs of *Joseph Andrews*. Madame Dacier sits on the lap of 'old Homer'; and Addison, put out of countenance by Virgil, consoles himself by patronising Steele. The humours of the emperor Julian are more tedious; but the genius of the novels is in sight.

V

It will be remembered on what plausible, and yet mistaken, grounds Jenny Jones was charged with the parentage of Tom. Most friends of Fielding will wish that he could with equal assurance be acquitted of the authorship of *An Apology for the Life of Mrs. Shamela*[1] *Andrews* (1741). This anonymous work is a very cruel and pungent, though not wholly undeserved, travesty of *Pamela*. One Parson Oliver professes to tell the *real* story; he presents Pamela as a sheer hussy, makes the worst of her cheap motives, turns her innocent affair with Williams into an amour, and leaves her husband, Mr. B. (now 'Mr. Booby'), prosecuting the pair in the criminal court. The writer is skilful; and, it is argued, who can he be but Fielding, who is not

recorded to have either owned or disowned the book ? It was laid to his door by Richardson, by Horace Walpole (on hearsay), and by other contemporaries ; and is now assigned to him by several good authorities. The evidence turns on an accumulation of small points. For instance, the dedication ' to Fanny ' is signed by ' Conny Keyber,' namely Colley Cibber, whom Fielding often attacked and who is thus entitled in the *Author's Farce*. A quotation in *Shamela* from South is to be found in the *Champion*. Mr. Booby is the name used, soon afterwards, in *Andrews*, and certain ' malapropisms ' (' vartue ' for ' virtue ' and ' sect ' for ' sex ') are to be found in both works. These things, taken together, do not look like accidents ; and yet they are not conclusive. I do but state an impression that the style of *Shamela* is not Fielding's. The coarseness is of a blunter and ruder kind than his ; and the mimicry does not suggest the subtler, the after all gentlemanly, method of *Joseph Andrews*. We should have to suppose that within a very short time Fielding was repeating his onslaught, and yet was violently changing his manner. *Shamela* is like a snowball with a stone inside it ; *Joseph Andrews*, though a hard enough snowball, is otherwise innocent. I would not ask, however, for a verdict of more than ' not proven ' ; and in any case *Shamela* ranks high among the ruthless parodies of the age.

It is usually said that Fielding set out to parody *Pamela*, and then, forgetting his purpose, struck out into the world of free invention. But he may also have felt that his parody was missing fire. Joseph resists the wiles of Slipslop and Lady Booby, and at first does not understand them. We may think him too simple-minded for a footman ; but he is not ridiculous. He is approved of by the author, and is at last made happy with his Fanny. Nor is his virtue, like that of Pamela, calculated. A true parody would have taken another turn. Joseph would have played with Lady Booby, have made the most of his attractions, and have had his ' virtue rewarded ' with her hand. As it is, he is packed out of the house. The real mimicry of Richardson comes in with Pamela herself, who talks perfectly in character. She advises her brother against marrying Fanny and ' throwing down our family again,' and bids him ' pray for the assistance of grace ' against his love.

Fielding is indebted to Richardson in other ways. More than once, in his essays, he was (perhaps by way of amends) to pay an almost exaggerated tribute to *Clarissa*. The picture of tragic appetite in Lady Booby is minutely drawn, much in the manner of Richardson ; and the ' language of passion,' as used by dames

like Miss Matthews or Lady Bellaston, seems to show his influence. The effect is not always happy; the style is rhetorical rather than convincing. The difference between the two artists comes out at once in the portrayal of humours. The harridan Jewkes in *Pamela* is drawn with a horrid literalness; we do not laugh at her. Fielding first shows his power in the speech of comic dialogue. Mrs. Slipslop suddenly opens fire:

> And why is Latin more necessitous for a footman than a gentleman? It is very proper that you clergymen must learn it, because you can't preach without it; but I have heard gentlemen say in London, that it is fit for nobody else. I am confidous my lady would be angry with me for mentioning it; and I shall draw myself into no delemy.

The virtue does not lie in the bungled words, though they are as good as those of Malaprop or Tabitha Bramble, but in the picture of the Slipslop mind, and of the thinking of the 'gentlemen in London.' These strokes were new in the English novel. Dialogue and story and picturing are not only alive and fresh in *Joseph Andrews*; they are harmonised, and help one another. Plot is still wanting, though the skill of *Tom Jones* is just foreshadowed. The principles of the 'comic epic poem in prose' are explained in the preface. Mere burlesque, he says, is not 'truly of the comic kind.' The quarry of comedy is the 'true ridiculous,' of which the 'only source' is 'affectation,' though it 'branches' into 'infinite streams'; and affectation springs from vanity or hypocrisy. Vices, and those 'of a very black kind,' may be shown, but not in the foreground; and they are to be made hateful, not ridiculous. Such a theory, however acute, is too formal to cover the flexible art of Fielding. Folly, in his scene, melts into wickedness, and also into goodness; and over all is the film of irony which gives unity of spirit to the whole. We care less for the author's formulae than for the gifts which elude them. One such gift, not always noticed, is his skill in varying the pace of the action. The imbroglios and frays go quickly, the talks by the wayside are leisurely and drawn out. This is another improvement upon Richardson, who will not hurry whatever the urgency.

Joseph Andrews shows how the theatre had cramped Fielding's talent and how lucky was his escape. We are now in a new world of character. It is impertinent to-day to praise the Towwouses and the Trullibers; the postilion who gave his 'great-coat, his only garment,' to the naked Joseph, and who was afterwards 'transported for robbing a hen-roost'; or the

justice who called out, 'Make Mr. Æschylus his *mittimus*.' As for Parson Adams, there is, if we except my Uncle Toby, only one other figure of the age who is equally solid, and vivid, and English, and attaching; and that is Samuel Johnson. Both men are good, brave, pious, learned, and infinitely odd; we need not try to compare further. Adams, indeed, is ducked, and 'roasted,' and sent to the kitchen, but never for a moment contemptible. One other trait reminds us of Johnson's mannerly regard for rank, combined with independence; Miss Reynolds records that

> on every occasion that had the least tendency to depreciate religion or morality, he totally disregarded all forms or rules of good breeding as unworthy of the slightest consideration.

And of Adams it is written that,

> though he paid all submission and deference to his superiors in other matters, where the least spice of religion intervened he immediately lost all respect of persons.

The absent-minded scholar, with a heart of gold, a fist of iron, and a pocket empty even of copper, is Fielding's greatest single creation.

VI

If Fielding had ever heard of the poem *Beowulf*, he might with some reason have called his *Tom Jones* the third epic in our language. Indeed, besides Milton's, there is still no other worth mentioning. A great scholar, Ker,[1] has noted how the vision of the 'phantom epic' had engaged, during two centuries, 'some of the strongest intellects in the world.' It was to be cut upon the ancient pattern and to rival the ancient examples. But Hobbes, Milton, Dryden, Hume, and Gibbon, all of whom discussed this subject, were thinking of poetry, and of serious poetry; and most of them held that such an epic was 'the greatest work which the soul of man is capable to perform.' Its satellite, naturally, was burlesque. Vulgar travesties of Virgil, like Scarron's; the followings by Tassoni, Boileau, and Pope, of the *Battle of the Frogs and Mice*; the lowering of chivalrous matter to the key of satire, in *Hudibras*; and the receipts of the Scriblerus Club for the mock-heroic poem: all these forms had been tried and exhausted. Fielding, who knew them well, put them away, and invented or at least perfected a far richer scheme, that of his celebrated 'comic epic in prose.' At the same time he worked out a clear-cut theory

of the form ; and this is Fielding's ' poetic,' or more properly, to coin a term, his *prosaic*. And there is no doubt that to his theory he owes not a little of his ever-to-be-praised skill as an architect of plot ; what Scott calls ' the felicitous contrivance and happy extrication of the story.' Some have cared little for this particular excellence, and think only of Partridge, timorous, credulous, garrulous, faithful, and an injured man ; of Squire Western, and of the night at Upton, and of wit and humour everywhere ; and certainly, ' here is God's plenty.' But the common reader, for whom Fielding wrote, cares a great deal, and cares rightly, for plot ; and so did Sophocles. The novel, in this respect, is nearer to drama than to epic, for an epic has no secret ; and Fielding has never wanted praise for the skilful and faithful way in which he plays the game with the reader. The secret is not a crime ; there is no murder, and no blood is shed except from scratched faces. Looking back from book eighteen, chapter eight, where the parentage of Jones is revealed, we perceive all the clues that we ought to have noted in book one, chapter four ; where the foundling made his appearance, and Bridget Allworthy ' rather took the good-natured side of the question.' The final disclosure is due to an intricate series of happenings—casual meetings, inadvertent words, and the rascally wits of Mr. Dowling putting two and two together. It is pleasant to consider *Tom Jones* as a puzzle and to see how well the plan works out. ' It excites curiosity, and holds it watchful ' ; so observed two young ladies, Astraea and Minerva Hill, much to the chagrin of Richardson. Fielding certainly makes a free use of coincidences ; but they do not strike us as unnatural. People who tramp the country like Jones really chance on one another again and again, in surprising ways. No one reads the book because it might have pleased Aristotle ; but we remember that judge's respect for the ' fable,' from which nothing can be taken, and to which nothing can be added, without damage. Probably Fielding, now in Elysium with Lucian, laughs over our academic interest in his mechanism. But the large and firm design is there ; and any reader can trace for himself the precision of the detail. The notes of time and place [1] in the story have been scrutinised by devotees, and will amuse all who are familiar with the valley of the Severn. The journeys of Tom and Sophia can be followed on the map from day to day, sometimes from hour to hour, from inn to inn, through town and village and crossway. Some problems remain, such as the identity of ' Mazard Hill,' where Jones came upon Miss Waters, and his precise route (probably lying through Pershore) between

Upton and Coventry. Ingenious persons have even made out that Fielding used an almanac and correctly produced a full moon at Gloucester at 5 P.M. on November 29, 1745; the date being thus narrowed down by the allusions to the Jacobite rebels, who were then upon their southward march. In any case the illusion of a diary, or true chronicle, is kept up. One slip in the reckoning of time was noted as early as 1791. Fielding allows only three weeks and five days (or perhaps a briefer, but still an impossibly brief, period) to pass between the end of June and midwinter.

But these are small things, and a writer like Wilkie Collins can be equally ingenious. Much as Fielding dwells on 'fable,' or plot, his real 'bill of fare' (as he calls it) is Character ('no other than Human Nature'). Fable without character is but a skeleton; character without fable cannot make a story; character, set in fable on a large scale, is the essence of the 'comic epic.' 'Since Chaucer was alive and hale,' no such company of pilgrims—poachers, Molly Seagrims, adventurers, and Parson Supples—had appeared on the English roads. At first, like Chaucer, Fielding likes to dwell, as in the case of Captain Blifil, on their dress and features, but the inventories are rarer as the story goes on. We do not know what the Millers looked like, or Lord Fellamar, or the Nightingales. Of Mrs. Bridget and Thwackum we hear that they resembled certain figures of Mr. Hogarth's. Young Blifil we never see at all. *Roderick Random* came out in 1748; did Fielding say to himself that costume and physiognomy were the business of Smollett? The persons of Tom and Sophia are described, but in an idealised or playfully exaggerated way. On the whole, Fielding prefers his characters to speak and act, and leaves the rest to our fancy. Each of them has a different idiom; each member of the same species, every landlady, is different. At the same time he thinks of them as types, somewhat as Blake sees the Canterbury pilgrims. Of one man he remarks, 'the lawyer is not only alive, but hath been so these four thousand years.'

Fielding does not, any more than his friends Hogarth and Lillo, avoid the trick of a too edifying contrast. 'Look here, upon this picture, and on this.' Blifil and Allworthy are opposed as black and white. Great pains are spent on Blifil, without one mitigating quality; he is drawn, surely, from an idea rather than from life. Allworthy might have been more real if he had *not* been drawn from the actual, but glorified, Ralph Allen. But he makes human mistakes, and the summer lightning of the irony plays about his exalted head. Thwackum,

unlike Square, has no virtues ; yet he is alive, with the life of one of Jonson's humorists breaking suddenly into Shakespeare's world. The same might be said of Colonel Bath in *Amelia*. But Fielding, unlike most novelists, produces a live hero and heroine. Sophia's moods and apprehensions are shown delicately and yet without a too precise anatomy of the emotions, and she is gently rallied all the time by the comic muse. Sometimes she becomes less distinct, amid the halo thrown about her by Fielding's memory of his wife. But Sophia, it is to be hoped, will always flourish : the kind of English girl that, without a spark of poetry, of book-wits, or book-subtleties, is blessedly normal, naturally well-bred ; with an extra share of courage and resource in a hard corner ; with no idea of resembling men, or of capturing them ; and fair to look upon. As for Mr. Jones, he has provoked as much criticism as if he had existed ; and he suggests a remark upon Fielding's code and his view of human nature.

VII

He seems eager, in one respect, to challenge ordinary morality : to extenuate faults of the blood, when they are not darkened by meanness, cowardice, treachery, or calculation. It is true that he skilfully exhibits them as punished by the natural course of events. Still, he feels that he must disarm the enemy by excuses, and he exalts the generous over the prudential virtues. To this effect he puts in his own hints and comments, and does not always let the story tell itself. The stiff moralists were probably more annoyed by the cheerful naturalistic tone of the narrative, when no comment was made at all. Fielding now and then is clearly uncomfortable. In the Lady Bellaston affair, which has always been criticised, he not only finds reasons, or motives partly presentable, for Tom's acceptance of money, but heaps up, just at this moment, instances of Tom's charity and generosity. Coleridge [1] wished that a passage had been added showing that Tom truly felt the shamefulness of his dependence. It might have been still better not to explain or plead at all. Tom being Tom, and the situation what it was, the incident is quite natural, and the moral could have been left to the reader, who knows that Tom is like other men in his weaknesses and is on the whole a very good fellow.

There are four texts which if taken together give us an idea of Fielding's temper. He speaks of ' that generosity of spirit

which is the sure foundation of all that is great and noble in human nature.' And in the pamphlet on Penlez he exclaims:

> Sure I am, that I greatly deceive myself, if I am not in some little degree partaker of that milk of human kindness which Shakespeare speaks of.

The other two passages are from the *Case of Elizabeth Canning*:

> I can truly say, that my memory doth not charge me with having ever insulted the lowest wretch that hath been brought before me. . . . Lastly, there is something within myself which rouses me to the protection of injured innocence, and which prompts me with the hope of an applause much more valuable than that of the whole world.

All the evidence bears out these declarations. In addition, Fielding has a fairly definite view of his fellows. Despite occasional Blifils, Blueskins, and low attorneys, men are normally good, or good-natured, and pleasantly absurd. Most of us have a stock of charity, which is not (as some have imagined) self-interest in disguise. Fielding writes to Lyttelton that

> there is a great pleasure in gratitude, though it is second, I believe, to that of benevolence; for of all the delights upon earth none can equal the rapture of conferring happiness upon those whom we think worthy of it.

Such a passion takes its highest form in self-immolating love like that of Amelia Booth. But there is conscience too, which is innate, and presides and directs within us 'like the Lord High Chancellor' in his court—an echo, as it were, from Butler's *Sermons*.

The 'analysis of the passions' was now a favourite industry of the philosophers (Ch. XVII.), and Fielding joins their ranks as a kind of irregular. He likes to dissect the more dangerous emotions in an epigram; La Rochefoucauld had not written for him in vain. He speaks now in person, and now dramatically: and here are some of his 'detached thoughts,' taken out of their context:

> 'Contempt had not so kept down my anger to my husband, but that hatred rose again on this occasion. What can be the reason of this?'—'Hatred is not the effect of love, even through the medium of jealousy. It is, indeed, very possible for jealous persons to kill the objects of their jealousy, but not to hate them.'—'Her love was now changed to disdain, which pride assisted to torment her. She despised herself for the meanness of her passion, and Joseph for its ill-success.'—'He was not a little pleased with finding a reason for

hating the man whom he could not help hating without any reason.' —' Friendship makes us warmly espouse the interest of others ; but it is very cold to the gratification of their passions.'

It was a time, as we know, when would-be philosophical talk spread down to the clubs and coffee-houses ; and Fielding is probably true to life when he brings it into the prison. The broken drifter, Booth, argues with Miss Matthews over the theory of the ' ruling passion,' which the *Essay on Man* had popularised. He urges that it cannot be resisted ; that our actions, therefore, ' could have neither merit nor demerit ' ; but that the passion *need* not always be a bad one. Also he says that Mandeville, whom the lady calls ' that charming fellow Mandevil,' ' hath left out of his system ' love, ' the best passion which the mind can possess.' Later on Booth's eyes are opened by reading Barrow's sermons ; and his preceptor, Dr. Harrison, speaks of ' the native beauty of virtue.' Equally in character are the debates of Square the sceptic and believer in the ' rule of right,' with Thwackum the hell-fire theologian. The ' rule of right ' is a phrase that had filtered down, probably from Samuel Clarke's *Boyle Lectures*, through the deists into common talk. Square becomes at last orthodox and repentant. Fielding himself inclined in his later years to believe, like Hamlet, in special providences, and wrote a tract to show the interposition of the divine hand in some thirty cases of murder ; but he is careful not to overload the novels with such speculations.

VIII

Amelia is not a deftly plotted story ; but once or twice the cards are kept in reserve with great effect. Few readers guess (any more than did Mr. Booth), until they are told, that it was not Amelia who went to the mask but Mrs. Atkinson in her place. The book is somewhat laden with generous lucubrations by the way ; and it is not written in high spirits. But the turnkey, the sharper, the bailiff and the myrmidons, have the fullness of life. There is more effusion and unrestrained deep sentiment than in *Tom Jones*. Amelia is the chief person in a serious and pathetic comedy. No more natural and gracious woman can be found in eighteenth-century fiction or drama. For all her touches of unreason and timidity, she does not lack humour or fibre. She pawns her portrait in order to buy what her husband likes for supper, only to find that he is pledged to go out ; he has, in fact, been led or trapped into an appoint-

ment with Miss Matthews. This Amelia has learnt through an anonymous letter, but in Spartan fashion she conceals her knowledge. She has much to forgive ; and Captain Booth, like Ibsen's Peer Gynt, chiefly exists in the faith and charity of a woman. We too are led to forgive him ; in spite of all his lapses he is essentially decent. Even Miss Matthews is forgiven by the author, and is one of his most careful studies. Her mainspring is vanity and the desire to capture ; the scene is alive whenever she appears. We hold our breath when she meets Amelia. But there is no such toleration for Amelia's sister, Miss Betty, who is spite and rapacity incarnate, and whose insolent letter is one of the triumphs of the book. Another is the figure of Sergeant Atkinson. We feel that a new kind of pathos has come into fiction when the Sergeant, supposed to be dying, confesses something to Amelia :

> To say the truth, without any injury to her chastity, that heart which had stood firm as a rock to all the attacks of title and equipage, of finery and flattery, and which all the treasures of the universe could not have purchased, was yet a little softened by the plain, honest, modest, involuntary, delicate, heroic passion of this poor and humble swain, for whom, in spite of herself, she felt a momentary tenderness and complacence, at which Booth, if he had known it, would perhaps have been displeased.

The *Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon* [1] was composed during Fielding's last months, when his courage, gaiety, and power of observation were proof against disease and discomfort. It is a diary rounded off and written up from recent recollection. Few of Fielding's letters are extant ; but some have been found which complete the picture of this voyage. They are addressed to his blind half-brother John, afterwards Sir John, Fielding, who succeeded him at Bow Street ; and they give further glimpses of Mrs. Fielding, of many domestic chagrins, and of the Captain Veal who blusters and beseeches in the *Journal*. Fielding also writes in his eager way of fish, and cider, and money, and dress, demanding 'my tie and a new mazer periwig from Southampton Street, and a new hat large in the brim.' A version of the *Journal* appeared in 1755, with allusions to Veal and other persons toned down or omitted, and with the language often altered. Sir John was probably responsible for this depleting process ; but the true first edition, the authentic one, which came later in the same year, has held its ground. The account of the author's stay at the Ryde inn, and his portrait of the landlady—the last of many such sitters—are in his best

style. His old skill in weaving together narrative and soliloquy, and his humorous and magnanimous temper, are seen everywhere; and the *Journal* illuminates, better than any other document, the talent that invented *Tom Jones*.

IX

The English of Fielding is not too precise or carefully balanced; it is free from the Latinism and rhetoric of the period. Much as he quotes the classics, he does not try to be Sallustian or Ciceronian. The models for his English are English, the writers of the age into which he was born. Swift laughed over *Tom Thumb* and was surviving in the body when *Joseph Andrews* was published. Addison was alive when *Love in Several Masques* was acted. The so-called Queen Anne prose was still fresh in the midst of the reign of George the Second. There is not much to say of the style of Fielding's novels except that it is pure, rich, and central. It is calm and leisurely, the speech of a man who has full control of his instrument. It has not the rapid movement or the accuracy of Smollett's, but it is more subtle than it looks. A study of Fielding's nicer shades should be enough to dispose of the old and foolish notion that he is a downright and rather beefy, if highly observant and cheerful personage. He does not often, except in mockery, practise set eloquence; but his rhythm is easy and harmonious, above all when he is moved by the sight of some deed of good nature that his fancy has invented. His plays and articles were mostly written from hand to mouth; but he takes much trouble over the form of the novels. Here his prose is perhaps most notable in dialogue. Partridge and Deborah, Lady Booby and Miss Matthews, all have (to use a printer's term) their own founts of language. Most of it is the language of any time since Dryden's; it has altered as little as the people who talk it. The highwayman who tried to rob Tom Jones when 'driven by distress,' was dismissed by him with two guineas, and afterwards reappears as the cousin of Mrs. Miller, thus thanks his benefactor:

> My little boy is recovered; my wife is out of danger, and I am happy. All, all owing to you, sir, and to my cousin here, one of the best of women. Indeed, sir, I must see you at my house. Indeed, my wife must see you and thank you. My children, too, must express their gratitude. Indeed, sir, they are not without a sense of their obligation.

This is what used to be called the language of the heart, and is so

simple that only a great writer can invent it. It is in prose what Wordsworth sought to use in poetry, the 'real language of men' who are in a 'state of vivid sensation'; and it is little to say that it is 'purified from all rational causes of disgust and dislike.' The language of 'sensibility' reads miserably after it. When Fielding halts and speaks in person, his wisdom often finds classic expression:

> I hope my friends will pardon me when I declare I know none of them without a fault; and I should be sorry if I could imagine I had any friend who could not see mine. Forgiveness of this kind we give and demand in turn. It is an exercise of friendship, and perhaps none of the least pleasant. There is, perhaps, no surer mark of folly than an attempt to correct the natural infirmities of those we love. The finest composition of human nature, as well as the finest china, may have a flaw in it; and this, I am afraid, in either case is equally incurable; though, nevertheless, the pattern may remain of the highest value.

X

Fielding's novels, though far less influential abroad than those of Richardson or Sterne, were yet popular in France, and still more so in Germany.[1] They were translated, and he is mentioned with honour by Lessing and Goethe. At home, the wider public felt the truth about him sooner than the literary class. The reception[2] of his writings and the history of his fame have been minutely investigated. *Joseph Andrews*, it appears, sold well, but was little noticed by the critics; it had no such vogue as *Pamela*; nor was it, in the eyes of the world, an exposure of the promoted housemaid and of the rewards of virtue. But it was praised by Gray, and also by the learned Mrs. Carter, who deserves a white mark for her sense and courage in backing Fielding from first to last. Of *Tom Jones* there were five editions in the year of its publication; and it produced a train of admirers and copyists. An unsigned *Essay on the New Species of Writing founded by Mr. Fielding* (1751) extolled the structure of the 'comic epic in prose'; and *Pompey the Little*, to be named hereafter, was the liveliest of the imitations. There was also a wave of abuse and protest, which ebbed and flowed and took at least a century to subside. One 'Orbilius' published in 1750 a minute, vulgar, and snappish *Examen* of the book. Johnson, in the *Rambler*, objected to heroes who are endowed with so many virtues that we 'lose abhorrence of their faults.' Richardson shook his throat like a respectable turkey-cock, and his allusions to Fielding are all disparaging and

malicious. There were many other attacks, and a good deal of gutter-invective. But Mrs. Carter wrote to Miss Talbot, in language that would have pleased Fielding, that *Tom Jones* was, in comparison with *Clarissa*,

> the most natural representation of what passes in the world, and of the bizarreries which arise from the mixture of good and bad, which makes up the composition of most folks ;

and Christopher Smart, an admirer worth having, said of *Amelia* that 'every scene of life is represented in its natural colours,' and that the author, 'in a vein of mirth, leads his readers into the knowledge of human nature.' William Whitehead, afterwards to be laureate, spoke of the 'peculiar art of writing upon low subjects without writing in a low manner.' This was said of the *Voyage to Lisbon*, which was little honoured at the time. *Amelia*, though read, was much attacked, and received, with its author, peculiarly malodorous treatment at the hands of Smollett. He paid, it is true, large compliments when Fielding was in his grave. There is also the unwilling praise of Johnson, who owned that he had to read *Amelia* 'through without stopping.' His comparison of Fielding with Richardson, of the man who could *only* show the dial of the watch while the other showed the works, is notorious.

Fielding was doubtless best relished by the educated readers who knew the society he delineated and who could partly taste his irony. The larger public were amused and convinced by the picture, and instinctively felt its humour and kindliness—a quality not prominent in our fiction between Sir Roger de Coverley and Dr. Primrose. Richardson, though full of avuncular benevolence, did not exactly warm the heart ; nor could Smollett, until he produced *Humphry Clinker*, be called a humane writer. Swift, even in *Gulliver*, was puzzling and intimidating. But Fielding, though destructive enough when he chose, dealt handsomely with human nature. Walpole might sneer and Johnson cavil, but the world read on, and continued to do so through the ups and downs of Fielding's reception by the judges. During the last years of his life he could watch the steady growth of his fame. The legends that traduced his life, or superimposed imaginary upon his real failings, were not to be sifted till late in the nineteenth century. As a man,[1] he now needs neither defence nor whitewashing. We need not now trouble too much to acquit him of sins that are not mortal. His work is seen to-day more clearly than ever to have earned the famous compliment paid by Gibbon to *Tom*

Jones. We know what has befallen the ' imperial eagle of the house of Austria ' ; the ' palace of the Escurial ' stands where it did ; and the ' exquisite picture of human manners,' which was to ' outlive ' them both, shows no sign of decay.

XI

It may be best to forget *Tom Jones* before opening *Roderick Random*, or we shall do wrong to the blunter and cruder comedy of the noisier and harsher writer. In Smollett's [1] first stories, his world of knockabout farce, like that of Mr. Punch hammering upon many sconces, may seem at first to have no particular sense in it, or reason behind it. No orderly composition, no still irony there ! Also we are often bespattered, as though by a mud-cart in full career. All this can be said, but it does not explain why Smollett is a classic author who has amused five or six generations and has left his mark upon great successors. If we turn to him from Richardson, not from Fielding, we begin to understand ; we see that he is a man, and also that he can write : write, not in the trailing, somewhat underbred fashion of the other, but rapidly and plainly, so that we presently trust his English, and let him carry us on without our stopping to complain or scrutinise. He jerks some one on to the scene, complete in gesture, dress (down to the shoes), physiognomy, and tricks of the voice (there is no soul at all, and no heart apparently, but no matter for that). Other such figures, all different and distinct, dance on too ; and things begin to happen, and never stop. Every one is in collision : butting, sprawling, roaring ; it may be a bloody combat, or a hoax not less bloody in its conclusion. The puppet-master does not say much, but you see that he despises his creatures, and enjoys their doings, and despises you if you do not enjoy them too. In the centre is the hero, that is, the only man to whom all things happen in succession that do happen. If you ask what *he* is like, the answer is not refreshing : he is usually a baddish fellow, so far as he is anything, and he extorts no pity when he chances to have the worst of it, and no admiration when he prospers. So the show goes on, and at last, for no special reason, stops. You have been forced to watch it, and have forgotten to be disgusted. These are first impressions, and they are never quite effaced ; but as we proceed with Smollett, they change ; we admire him yet more, and like him, now better, now worse, but in the end much better ; above all, when we reach his last, his unexpected masterpiece.

Tobias George Smollett (1721-1771) was a Lowland Scot of good descent and scholarly education. But his training in life was of the roughest; he was always an alien: a Northerner among the English, and a Briton when he travelled among the Latin peoples. He was apprenticed to medicine; and at eighteen he came to England armed with some introductions and with an impossible tragedy, the *Regicide*, in his wallet. He entered the navy as a surgeon's mate, and described with indignant and savage power the horrors of the expedition to Cartagena. He was now ready to become the chief of our sea novelists. After visiting Jamaica, Smollett returned to London and mixed in many circles, medical, theatrical, and literary. It was all grist to the mill of a satirist and describer; but he did not at once discover his true form. He was stung by the rejection of the *Regicide*, and vented his wrath in two satires, *Advice* (1746) and *Reproof* (1747); and also, moved by the 'barbarities' of the English at Culloden, wrote his ringing lyric, the *Tears of Scotland*. In 1748 appeared the *Adventures of Roderick Random*; in 1751, the *Adventures of Peregrine Pickle*; and in 1753, the *Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom*. This group of stories shows Smollett's talent in its early freshness and riotous abundance.

He had little success, it appears, as a physician, and now turned aside for many years to miscellaneous work; it is mostly uncreative, and much of it is only matter for the bibliographies. The translations of *Gil Blas* (1749) and of *Don Quixote* (1755) throw light on Smollett's tastes and models, and the former work, where he freely uses Charles Jervas's version (1742), was long in acceptance. We have also his statement that he wrote a 'very small part' of a *Compendium of Voyages*; a 'small part' of the *Modern Universal History*; a 'small part' of a many-volumed translation of the works of Voltaire, but 'all the historical and critical notes' thereto; and a 'great part' of the *Critical Review*. This organ he started in 1756, involving himself in a prosecution and a spell of prison. In 1762 Smollett, a man of many chagrins, edited the *Briton* in support of Lord Bute, who presently found his advocacy inconvenient, and dropped him. Meantime, in 1757, he began to issue his *History of England*, which quickly became, with its continuation, very popular. It was written very fast; and the completed work covers the period between the arrival of Julius Caesar and the death of George the Second. Not all this hack-work could extinguish the real Smollett. Even in his *History* there is first-hand material; and his literary review of the reign

of George the Second, with its handsome praises of Queen Caroline, Richardson, and Hume, is full of interest. Also from this period there emerges, besides Smollett's farce the *Reprisal* (1757), a new and pleasing story, the *Adventures of Sir Launcelot Greaves* (1760-2). He went abroad for health, and in 1766 published one of his best books, *Travels through France and Italy*. On his return he was warmly received in Edinburgh, and produced his gross and would-be Rabelaisian fantasy, the *History and the Adventures of an Atom* (1769). He travelled once more, drifted to Leghorn, and died there in 1771, having published in the same year the *Expedition of Humphry Clinker*, in which his genius shines to the full.

XII

The preface to *Roderick Random* sets out very plainly the author's conception of a novel. It is to be a satire, both 'entertaining and universally improving'; it is to describe familiar scenes, and the follies, foibles, and knaveries of ordinary life. The hero is to be prepossessing, and to 'engage the ingenuous'; and in the case of Roderick, there are good reasons for making him a Scot. The result is to be a romance, of the right kind; and that kind had been discovered by Cervantes, in his 'inimitable piece of ridicule.' After him had come Lesage, who had shown 'infinite humour and sagacity.' On *Gil Blas*, the 'following sheets,' says Smollett, are 'modelled.' But, alas, it seems that even Gil Blas has his defects, considered as a hero. He is too purely amusing, and is himself too much amused. 'His disgraces,' we learn, 'excite mirth rather than compassion.' But this is not enough; the hero must really be a sufferer. The 'transitions' of Gil Blas

> from distress to happiness, or at least ease, are so sudden, that neither the reader has time to pity him, nor himself to be acquainted with affliction. This conduct, in my opinion, not only deviates from probability, but . . .

But what? So far Smollett's programme is clear, and much of his criticism just. Suddenly we learn his real mood, which gives the keynote of his fiction; and his difference from Lesage is seen to be deeper than any likeness. As yet he is of the tribe of Ben Jonson; one of the angry observers of mankind; the campaigning satirist, not the tolerant humorist at all; for he goes on:

> . . . but prevents that generous indignation which ought to ani-

mate the reader against the sordid and vicious disposition of the world.

What follows is well in keeping. The comedy, or novel, of humours is the natural resource of such a writer. Smollett, so far from avoiding 'mean scenes,' will be able to show 'the whimsical peculiarities of disposition as nature has implanted them,' and as they are 'undisguised by affectation, ceremony, or education.' Such is Smollett's plan, and we must leave him his plan and see what comes of it, and not complain because he is himself. Certainly, in the execution of his vagrant, or picturesque, scheme he is quite as consistent as the inventor of 'prosai-comi-epic writing.'

> The low situations in which I have exhibited Roderick I never experienced in my own person. . . . The only similitude [is] . . . in my being of a reputable family in Scotland, in my being bred a surgeon, and in having served as a surgeon's mate on board of a man-of-war during the expedition to Cartagena.

So wrote Smollett in 1763; but his experience at sea is plainly used up and heightened, we know not how far, in *Roderick Random*. Its edge is still keen; and the bitterness of his spirit is not concealed. The pictures of the cockpit and the hospital ship are based on memories of Cartagena. They may turn the stomach, like the reality; but they are drawn with the honesty of Hogarth, and with something of his power. There is none of the tedious, sham-scientific 'realism' of Zola's inferior work. Smollett can be unsavoury, but not on principle. Still, his adventures hardened his nerves, and he sees no cause to spare his reader. Nor does he spare Roderick. The young Scot, blundering his way southward, exchanging buffets as he goes, and cheated and beggared in town, has some twinges of shame, and is considerably punished for his vices. Smollett tries to whitewash him in unsatisfactory ways, endowing him, on occasion, with a lavish good-nature. But the author has too much of the callousness of his own young men. Once, indeed, he manages, with unwonted subtlety, to get the whole truth told, by Strap the barber. This 'affectionate creature,' as Roderick calls him, is by far the more human and amusing figure of the pair, although the general butt and comic coward. One sentence gives the measure of them both:

> 'On my own account,' he said, 'I am quite unconcerned; for, while God spares me health and these ten fingers, I can earn a comfortable subsistence anywhere; but what must become of you, who have less humility to stoop, and more appetites to gratify?'

Roderick comes through to a happy ending ; finds a long-lost rich papa, and goes to his bride, the lovely Narcissa (a shop-window thing of wax) with a dreadful smirk upon his features. These are drawbacks indeed ; but the story has proved its vital qualities. It has all Smollett's curious power of instantly changing the scene and keeping up the expectancy. A new figure enters just when it is wanted ; and some living faces are to be discerned amid the crowd of ' humorists.' Doctor Morgan, with his rich and entertaining idiom, might not have existed but for Fluellen ; yet here, too, ' there is much care and valour in this Welshman.' Bowling, like the inexhaustible and admirable Strap, reminds us more of Fielding's figures than of Ben Jonson's. The scoundrelly Capuchin, and the eloquent Miss Jenny, and the exciseman, are equally alive. Smollett's first story remains his best and gayest—always with the exception of his last.

The same virtues, and some fresh vices, appear in *Peregrine Pickle*. Smollett is again indulgent to his hero, who is worse than Roderick. Once Peregrine attempts to drug the virtuous young lady, with whose hand he is rewarded in the end. *Quid plura ?* We do not believe in Peregrine's redeeming qualities. But he is alive when he is *not* displaying them : impudent, mischievous, and battered but insubmersible, like a cork on the waters. Once more there is the string of laughter-making passages, as rapid as the ' pantomime rallies ' of our boyhood. In Paris, in Bath, in Brussels, and in the Fleet prison, there is endless good, though at times disgusting, farce, rising into comedy and promptly sinking back again ; and, above all, endless hoaxing, with Peregrine for master of the revels and sometimes for their victim. This business of the hoax, or practical joke, which flourished both in life and in fiction down to the day of Theodore Hook and later, merits study by the antiquary. *Peregrine Pickle* is also full of personal caricature. The ' doctor,' who is the poet Akenside, and the painter Pallet, whose identity is not known, are pelted, for reasons that have not come down to us, with gross and peculiar relish. But once more we search, not without success, for traces of humanity and dramatic truth. Trunnion, despite his too often tedious sea-lingo, is a creation, and there is a true, if somewhat mannered, pathos in his dying request :

' As for the motto, or what you call it, I leave that to you and Mr. Jolter, who are scholars ; but I do desire, that it may not be engraved in the Greek or Latin lingos, and much less in the French which I abominate, but in plain English, that, when the angel comes

to pipe all hands, at the great day, he may know that I am a British man, and speak to me in my mother tongue. And now I have no more to say, but God in heaven have mercy upon my soul, and send you all fair weather, wheresoever you are bound.' So saying, he regarded every individual around him with a look of complacency, and closing his eye, composed himself to rest, while the whole audience, Pipes himself not excepted, were melted with sorrow.

Certainly Pipes is 'not excepted'; his taciturn fidelity and impassiveness always please, and are a relief from the general strain of virulence. And the band of Jacobite exiles at Calais, 'four or five gentlemen, all of whom seemed to look with an air of dejection' at the 'white cliffs of Albion,' are a group worthy of Scott. Dr. John Moore states that Smollett had himself met these wanderers. And *Peregrine Pickle*, even at the worst, is a surprising museum of 'documents'—of notes on the dress, the drink, the card-games, the low-life etiquette, the salutations and ceremonies, of that time and world.

The *Peregrine Pickle* [1] that we now read is not the book that appeared in 1751. Our text is that of the second edition, now known to have been published in 1758, and not in 1752 as was formerly supposed. In the interval Smollett, for reasons that can only be guessed, gave the book a drastic revision. Some of the changes are literary; many sentences are shortened or broken up, for the sake of ease. Others are concessions to decorum—relative concessions. A good deal of farcical, highly amusing, and not specially improper matter is also dropped. Those who wish to read the tale of the he-goat, or of the calf whose face was illumined with phosphorus, or of the forty cats and the hosier, must go back to the earlier text. Other omissions may be due to Smollett's humaner instinct: the description of Garrick in the part of Richard the Third, and the horrid parody of Lyttelton's *Monody* upon his wife, disappear. So, too, does a gross attack on Fielding, who had riposted, with great good temper, in the *Covent Garden Journal* (1752): a step which at once drew from Smollett the most disgusting of all his performances, the pamphlet (*A Faithful Narrative*, etc.) in which Fielding, under the name of 'Habbakuk Hilding,' is insulted. In his *History of England*, when Fielding was dead, Smollett inserted his repentant compliment. *Peregrine Pickle* is also notorious for the *Memoirs of a Lady of Quality*, inserted as chapter lxxxi.; the lady being the Viscountess Vane, of no reputation. It is still uncertain why Smollett put them in, and whether he had a hand in them, either in the first edition, or in that of 1758 where they have undergone revision.

XIII

It is a relief when Smollett's earlier heroes cease to ask for our indulgence; and in *Ferdinand Count Fathom* he presents a villain without a flaw. But Fathom is tedious; if he owes his being to Jonathan Wild, he has none of Jonathan's magnificence; and after a while the author has had enough of him. For a long time he vanishes, and the stage is taken by one of his victims, the uninteresting Renaldo, and by Renaldo's lady, the lovely Monimia, one of Smollett's featureless heroines. In the end Fathom reappears, now brought very low, and, in an incredible fashion, repentant. We leave him 'bathed with his tears,' and about to settle

> in a cheap county in the north of England, where he and his wife could live comfortably on an annuity of sixty pounds, until his behaviour should entitle him to a better provision.

Such a finale may pass in the *Vicar of Wakefield*, where the villain is humorously allowed to 'reside in quality of companion at a relation's house'; but it does not comport with Smollett's darker humour. A tract has been tied to the tail of a story of adventure. Yet there are fresh signs of Smollett's power. The *Castle of Otranto* is not only forestalled but outdone in a few pages that announce the 'tale of terror.' Ferdinand in the storm-swept forest, Ferdinand in the loft with the dead man 'still warm, who had been lately stabbed,' and Ferdinand travelling thence with the 'withered Hecate' on his horse, and with his pistol at her ear, communicates his shiver: 'common fear was a comfortable sensation to what he felt in this excursion.' The 'prefatory address' declares the author's purpose of 'terrifying' the 'unwary,' not indeed by these alarums, but by the tale of Fathom's fall. Many of the scenes and portraits (such as that of the hero's virago-mother who 'followed' the army) are in his more ordinary vein, and are admirably finished. Smollett, writes James Fitzmaurice-Kelly, in this tale 'reproduced the picaresque verve, if not the judicial temper, of his Spanish models.'

He had translated *Don Quixote*; and, like Fielding before him, he now tried to acclimatise the knight and squire in England. Sir Launcelot Greaves, in the novel that bears his name, not only wanders about armoured and helmeted, but infects others with his mania; he has a rival, and also an understudy, who are similarly equipped. These beings patrol from inn to inn, are banged and battered, and at last are more or less

cured. We have to forget not only Cervantes, but the radical incongruity in the scene; and, strangely enough, it becomes easy to do so. The book is cleaner, kindlier, and not less lively, than any of its predecessors, and does not fly in the face of our natural sympathies. Sir Launcelot, who redresses wrongs, dispenses charity, and confounds the 'villanous and insolent' Justice Gobble, must be regarded, not as a real creature, but as a projection of Smollett's idealism; of that generous dreaming that lies behind all his railing. Some of the writing in this story ranks with Smollett's best. Such is the overture in the Black Lion, where the 'social triumvirate' of surgeon, captain, and attorney forgather; and the humours of the prison and the election are in keeping. Smollett, it must be said, relapses sadly in the anonymous *Adventures of an Atom*, an ungainly example of the kind of story in which a *thing* is the narrator; as in Charles Johnstone's *Adventures of a Guinea* (1760-5). Here the speaker is an 'atom,' carried from one human body to another; and the atom pours out floods of scatological abuse against the statesmen and policy of 'Japan.' Drawing upon, and even outdoing, Swift, and also trying to mimic Rabelais, Smollett discharges his rancour upon all the English politicians of his time, including Bute and North. Once, too, he appears to satirise Frederick the Great. Wit and vigour are not absent; but the fierce and dirty jibing goes on too long, and the book is a difficult one to reprint.

XIV

The great age of fiction comes to a worthy close in *Humphry Clinker*. In 1771 the last story of note had been *A Sentimental Journey* (1768); *Evelina* was not to come till 1778. Smollett now, to be followed by Miss Burney, brought the novel back awhile into the epistolary form from which Fielding had extricated it. Richardson had shown how to use, and also how not to use, that form; and Smollett profited by the warning. He is careful to avoid the disheartening prolixity of *Grandison*; he does not traffic in the niceties of sentiment, and is not tempted to make the story creep even more slowly than real life. One danger of the species he not only evades but turns to advantage, the repetition of the same scene or incident by different pens. But Smollett makes this part of his capital. Lydia and Mr. Bramble see Ranelagh through different eyes; the point of view changes with each correspondent, and we must put all the reports together to get the picture. The plan, in

fact, brings out Smollett's true gift at least as well as direct narrative.

In *Humphry Clinker* there are five reporters, the uncle, the aunt, the niece, the nephew, and the handmaid, each with his or her confidant reading in the distance. Of the confidants we have a clear picture, though they never write: Dr. Lewis, Sir Watkin Philips of Jesus College, and the rest. Matthew Bramble, with his keen Welsh voice and open-hearted kindness, is a kind of Smollett, humanised now and smiling at himself as he grumbles. Jerry Melford is a real, light-spirited and hot-headed, but likeable young man; his sister is a young lady, drawn with a pleasant raillery that we hardly expect from the angry Smollett. The twisted English of Mrs. Tabitha Bramble and the grosser spelling of Winifred Jenkins are feats of a kind that brings Smollett closer to Fielding. Clinker himself and Lismahago are somewhere on the line between eccentrics of the kind familiar in Dickens, and real persons; and Lismahago, although he steps over that line, is always entertaining. Smollett, in this last story, makes his way out of his former world of vivid but somewhat distorted portraiture into the world he really saw. All is now unforced ease, and omnipresent good humour.

There is still, of course, abundance of the ducking, sprawling and *verwickeltes Durcheinander* of upset coaches, in which he had always revelled; but all the better. There is also some excess of medical detail, and of appeals to the sense of smell; but these things do not predominate, or taint the air. The cooked-up 'romantic' plot is there for form's sake; the real unity, which is much greater than in the usual 'picaresque' novel, is to be found elsewhere. It is, certainly, of an external kind; but it is none the less agreeable. The 'expedition' has to take a given route and to be back by Christmastide. Perhaps a hint is here taken from *Tom Jones*; for much of the journey is mapped out and dated. It occupies five months. The travellers go from Gloucester to London, through Bath; then north through Yorks and Durham, then by Edinburgh and Stirling to Cameron. There follows a trip through Smollett's own country to the realm of Argyle. They return by Glasgow, Manchester, and Buxton, and then, somehow, to Gloucester. Here the party, with its three newly married couples, disperses. All this detail is good and nourishing, and helps the illusion. There are long halts on the way, and some of the big cities are described by Mr. Bramble, much in the spirit of Smollett's own *Travels*, which had given him excellent practice when he sat down to write *Humphry Clinker*.

These *Travels* [1] *through France and Italy* rank in interest near to the novels. Much of the matter, no doubt, is antiquarian or descriptive. In the age before guide-books, Nice, and Nîmes, and the Roman churches were fresh to the English reader. Here Smollett's scholarship and curiosity have full scope, and some of his discourses are too solid for our taste; yet he can never be quite dull, and some of his reports are as lively as anything that he invented. One letter describes the journey from Rome to Florence. Once the party are 'on the brink of a precipice,' and they find 'travelling in a carriage exceeding tedious, dreadful, and dangerous.' Smollett rages through the mud and foul inns and bad weather; he disputes with a dragoon, with the drivers, and with a landlord, 'who had all the external marks of a ruffian'; also with the slippery guide, 'swearing horribly that I would blow his brains out.' We have one of our rare glimpses of Mrs. Smollett, the creole wife, 'a delicate creature, who had scarce ever walked a mile in her life,' and of Smollett keeping an affectionate eye on her, as he shears and clears his way through these and all other vicissitudes.

The *Travels* disclose yet another Smollett. The words *beautiful* and *romantic*, which did not appeal to Roderick or Peregrine, are often on his lips. The 'chace' of Fontainebleau is 'beautifully wild and romantic'; so are the mountains of Esterelles, and on their slopes is

> the *laurus cerasus*, the fruit of which being now ripe, made a most romantic appearance through the snow that lay upon the branches.

Smollett likes to use the same word of descending water. The falls of Terni with their double rainbow rouse him to fervour; and we find that in this case-hardened realist, rather than in the ampler brain of Fielding, there lurks the spirit of poetry. Several of Smollett's poems have a brave cadence. The *Tears of Scotland*, in octosyllabics, is in rhythm a curious and worthy anticipation of Scott's lays:

> Thy towering spirit now is broke;
> Thy neck is bended to the yoke . . .

Smollett's few songs of love or gallantry, and his *Ode to Leven-Water*, though they are not chanted to the *lyra heroica*, have a similar movement. The opening of the *Ode to Independence* (1773), with its 'Lord of the lion-heart and eagle-eye,' might have been coveted by Gray. There are glimpses of the same gift in Smollett's prose. The passages in *Ferdinand Count Fathom* on the forest storm and the Aeolian harp show a turn

of imagination which is not, I think, to be found before in the English novel :

> The soft and tender notes of peace and love were swelled up with the most delicate and insensible transition into a loud hymn of triumph and exultation, joined by the deep-toned organ, and a full choir of voices, which gradually decayed upon the ear, until it died away in distant sound, as if a flight of angels had raised the song in their ascent to heaven. Yet the chords hardly ceased to vibrate after the expiration of this overture, which ushered in a composition in the same pathetic style ; and this again was succeeded by a third, almost without pause or intermission, as if the artist's hand had been indefatigable, and the theme never to be exhausted.

The pictorial parts of the *Travels* are of a gayer kind. Smollett loves flowers, and comes upon ' daffodils, blowing in full glory, with such beauty, vigour, and perfume, as no flower in England ever exhibited.' At the Villa Pinciana he revolts from the ' flat, regular alleys,' contrasting them with the ' agreeable negligence ' of an English park, ' cut into delightful alleys, perfumed with honeysuckle and sweetbriar.' Soon, of course, we hear the rasping voice that we know better, describing the Italian *cicisbei*, or the head-dress of the French ladies, ' borrowed from the Hottentots.' Like the *Reprisal*, the *Travels* are packed with gross amusing prejudices of the anti-Gallican sort. The forecast, written in 1765, of a possible ' great change in the constitution ' of France, is hopeful and New-Whiggish in tone : ' superstition loses ground ; ancient prejudices give way ; a spirit of freedom takes the ascendant.'

XV

Every phase of Smollett's rough pilgrimage is reflected in his writings. His ' interiors ' of the prison, the gambling hell, and the hospital ship have the stamp of experience. His medical pursuits leave their trail upon his page, and he does not take to heart his own sentence,

> There are certain mortifying views of human nature, which undoubtedly ought to be concealed as much as possible, in order to prevent giving offence.

But Smollett's dealings in the noisome do not always mean that he is enjoying himself. Often he writes as a moralist and reformer ; and some of his pictures of vice, and even of a sexual perversion which had hardly yet figured in our classic fiction, show striking courage. Nor is artistry absent, the artistry of

Hogarth's *Gin Lane*. He can also be a brutal and unfair pugilist, as in his assault upon Fielding. Sometimes he seems to hate his characters more than he does any real enemy ; and this mood colours his descriptions. Thus Mr. Lavement the apothecary is

> a little old withered man, with a forehead about an inch high, a nose turned up at the end, large cheek-bones that helped to form a pit for his little grey eyes, a great bag of loose skin hanging down on each side. . . .

It is the style in which a schoolboy would like, if he could, to describe a hated pedagogue. The same method, literal and yet overcharged, is applied to dress. Smollett has a grievance against visible *things* as well as men, and belabours them just as freely : the dirt of inns, the horrors of the cockpit. Objects are seldom beautiful, or exactly agreeable ; but they are redeemed by being inveterately odd and funny. Everything, in the end, makes for honest laughter ; and Smollett's hard high spirits, as time goes on, and as his temper improves, mellow into the rare and finer humour of *Humphry Clinker*. Luckily they are never quenched. Even his little farce, the *Reprisal*, with its ship-board atmosphere and patriotic humours, its comic Scotchman, Irishman, and Frenchman, has this brisk quality, and was long in demand.

Smollett's language, it is often truly said, is surer, and more rapid and direct, than Fielding's. He had, no doubt, the easier task ; he did not need that delicate adjustment of words to an underplay of suggestion, which in Fielding is often overlooked. He could also, in his haste, fall into the heavier style of the day :

> Peregrine's penetration easily detected her sentiments, and he was nettled at her dissimulation, which served to confirm him in his unwarrantable designs upon her person. He persisted in his assiduities with indefatigable perseverance. . . .

But in the novels this is rare ; let Smollett warm to his story, and his English becomes classical at once. It is the same in his *History of England* ; and in its *Continuation*, which deals with his own time, he can be as direct as ever. What could be better told in brief than his story of an affair which made much noise in the year 1753, and on which Fielding also spoke his mind ?

> In the beginning of the year an obscure damsel of low degree, whose name was Elizabeth Canning, promulgated a report, which in a little time, attracted the attention of the public. She affirmed,

that on the first day of the new year, at night, she was seized under Bedlam wall by two ruffians, who, having stripped her of her upper apparel, secured her mouth with a gag, and threatened to murder her, should she make the least noise, conveyed her on foot about six miles to a place called Enfieldwash, and brought her to the house of one Mrs. Wells, where she was pillaged of her stays ; and, because she declined to turn prostitute, confined her in a cold, damp, separate, and unfurnished apartment. Here she remained a whole month, without any other sustenance than a few stale crusts of bread and about a gallon of water ; till at length she forced her way through a window, and ran home to her mother's house almost naked, in the night of the twenty-ninth of January.

Nothing could be simpler ; it is, if we like, mere presswork ; but compare it with any competent presswork of to-day, and we feel that we are in presence of a lost craft, and that we cannot say exactly what has been lost.

Smollett's far-reaching influence on the English novel has always been recognised, and is not yet fully explored. Only a few aspects of it may be suggested. He is, first and foremost, a 'man for whom the visible world exists,' and who can word exactly what his senses tell him. Many a page in Dickens or Marryat would have been different but for his example ; and *Peregrine Pickle*, above all, left its traces. Smollett opened a new tract in fiction, the life and humours of the sea. Defoe had explored that element, but had seen it through the eyes of Crusoe. Roderick, or Smollett, is the angry educated observer of sea life and manners. Again, his pen is spurred by a true abhorrence of oppression and abuses, which he displays in their naked ugliness. As a critic [1] has said, this union of the realist and the reformer was something new, and bore its fruits : and, in the person of Mr. Bramble,

[1] Le réalisme s'achève en philanthropie. Cette alliance était féconde. Reprise, étendue plus tard, elle servira la fortune durable du réalisme en Angleterre.

Lastly, Smollett gave a powerful impulse to the good old scheme of the 'life and adventures,' in which the 'adventures' are strung upon the 'life,' and only end, if they do end, with the wedding of the hero. The continued attraction of the plotless novel is seen in the histories of Barry Lyndon, of David Copperfield, and of Harry Richmond.

CHAPTER VIII

STERNE: OTHER FICTION

I

From the wide stage and open highways of the world we pass indoors, to Sterne.[1] He too wanders abroad, but he carries his atmosphere with him. It has become closer, with many a strange whiff pervading it; the 'sensibility' that Fielding and Smollett seemed to brush away has returned, in a more disturbing form. Classic shapeliness and unmannered writing have disappeared; the novel has contracted. Yet something new and precious has come into it, which it is never to lose and of which the sources are not easy to find. Sterne flourished as a writer from 1760 to 1771, by the side of Macpherson, Percy, Smart, and Chatterton; Churchill was the clamorous poet of the day, and Boswell was making his notes. The *Vicar of Wakefield* (1766) came out between the eighth and ninth books of *Tristram Shandy*. Sterne is markedly remote from all these writers. He does not draw on the springs of old romance or on the poetry and melancholy of landscape; or deal in mystery, or argue, or inveigh. He renews and subtilises the art of fiction by other methods. He brings a ray of his own to bear on daily life, lighting up the 'interior' of a parlour or sentry-box, or the courtyard or bedroom of a French inn, with a sharpness and minuteness, and a coloured fringe, unknown before. He throws over the scene a fine spume of comment and of fantastic learning, and steeps it in a new sort of humour; and he makes an assault on the heart and feelings, peculiar to himself, for which he appropriates the term *sentimental*; carrying meanwhile the craft of prose, in description and dialogue, to a finer point of perfected artifice than any writer since Congreve.

Thus Sterne's vision, his humour, his reading, his sentiment, and his verbal mastery unite into something without precedent, indefinable as a scent. His idiosyncrasy was felt at once, at home and abroad. It affected, and not only for the moment, the leading mind of the age. Goethe[2] speaks with emphasis of the liberating influence exerted by Sterne upon himself and

Young Germany, and owns a 'boundless debt' to him, coupling him in this respect with Shakespeare and Goldsmith. He praises the humorist who was the foe of all 'pedantry and Philistinism' for his 'sagacity, insight, contentedness, and tolerance.' The whole eulogy may seem out of scale if we forget that the debt of Germany was not that of England. Germany had a greater mental deadweight to overcome than England with her rich and varied literary traditions. Yet Sterne, in both countries, represented more than one refreshing influence. Like Richardson before him, he spoke for the revolt against dry logic and reason; but, unlike him, also for the revolt against code and custom. He was all for the flow of feeling and the wisdom of the heart, and for the precise unbiassed finding of the senses, humorously reported. Except in the pulpit he seldom preached; he had no formulae to get rid of; and he professed charity and tolerance rather than rigid morals. At home, it was not so much his profession of sensibility as his piquancy and oddity, his finished and daring pictures of the private life, and his power of humane portraiture, that gave him his vogue. These, in fact, are the qualities by which he lives. The ailment of sensibility lasted long, but ran its course. Goethe, in his majestic old age, had long come out of it, and calmly traced its symptoms; but he cherished his old regard for Sterne. The cult had gone at times to grotesque lengths in Sterne, and still more in his imitators. It had also raged in France,[1] Sterne contributing; but the prime mover was Rousseau. Sterne left his mark on Diderot, Xavier de Maistre, and many lesser minds. *Tristram Shandy*, though well known in France, had to wait some time for a translation; *A Sentimental Journey* was acclaimed, translated, and imitated at once. This continental influence, which extended to Italy,[2] has been traced by scholars, but can only be mentioned here.

II

The earlier life of Laurence Sterne (1713-1768) is well sketched in the breathless scrap of memoir that he wrote for his daughter Lydia. He passed his childhood in Ireland wandering with the regiment of his father Roger Sterne, a kindly shiftless subaltern, some of whose features are thought to reappear in Toby Shandy. We imagine Sterne as growing up with little discipline and few prejudices, storing away in his memory strange physiognomies and military humours. Unlikely as it sounds, he was of Yorkshire stock, and went to school in that county. At Cambridge

he may have learned his taste for curious old authors; and there he knew John Hall, afterwards Hall-Stevenson, his chief intimate in later life. Sterne's letters to his crony are in an unbraced and unbuttoned style, which gives the most faithful picture of this strangest of eighteenth-century parsons. For a parson he became, lying hid for many years in a Yorkshire parish, but sharing too in the active social life of the city of York. He preached many sermons, which became more and more imbued with the Shandean tincture. His style begins to appear in his letters. Some are written to his uncle Jaques Sterne, Archdeacon of Cleveland, a domineering ecclesiastic, on whom for a time he depended. Others are to his mother, a difficult lady whom he seems, contrary to legend, to have treated with some forbearance. Sterne was also entangled in local and clerical squabbles; and in his description of one of these episodes his manner is already formed. One day in 1750 he walked into the shop of a bookseller in York, Hildyard, who for some reason was deputed to engage casual preachers for the task later known as 'guinea-pigging.' Jaques Sterne was supposed to be jealous of his nephew's note in the pulpit, and to have attempted to stop the supplies. Sterne's capital letters, and the like, which he studied with much care, may for once be reproduced:

> With the awful Solemnity of a Premier who held a Lettre de Cachêt [*sic*] upon whose Contents my Life or Liberty depended—after a Minut's Pause—he [Hildyard] thus opens his Commission: 'Sir—my Friend the A. Deacon of Cleveland not caring to preach his Turn, as I conjectured, has left me to provide a Preacher,—but before I can take any Steps in it with Regard to you I want first to know, Sir, upon what Footing You and Dr. Sterne are?'—'Upon what Footing?'—'Yes, Sir, how your Quarel stands?'—'What 's that to you—How our Quarel stands? What 's that to you, you Puppy?'—'I hope, Mr. Sterne, you are not Angry.'—'Yes, I am; but much more astonished at your *Impudence*.' I know not whether the Chancellor's stepping in at this Instant and flapping to the Dore, did not save his tender Soul the Pain of the last Word. However that be, he retreats upon this unexpected Rebuff, takes the Chancellor aside, asks his Advice, comes back Submissive, begs Quarter. . . .

This rapid flexible style was afterwards to take on many a twist and flourish; but Sterne can already give the essence of a small episode; and it marks a great advance on the too well known epistles of his courtship, with their 'quiet and sentimental repasts.' It is in one of these that Sterne addresses the dwelling of his lady in the remarkable phrase, 'Oh happy

modification of matter!' The lady was Elizabeth Lumley, whom he married in 1741. Their common life was to be a prolonged, painful kind of comedy. Sterne was often to treat his wife scurvily; but some of the stories at his expense have been disproved, and traits of his kindness are on record. In 1759 appeared Sterne's little tractate, prompted by a teapot-storm in the cathedral city. It was at first entitled *A Political Romance*, and afterwards the *History of a Good Warm Watchcoat*.[1] It seems to show a study of Swift, or of Arbuthnot, or more probably of both; it is very lively, but is only a squib. *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, was now upon the stocks. Sterne had long been saving up his observations and maturing his form; and he had found the subject, or no-subject, that gave him scope. He was forty-six when the first two volumes of *Tristram* were published in 1760.

III

The second, the brilliant phase of his life now opens. We are struck, at the beginning of the reign, with the eager thirst of society for any new kind of mental entertainment. The novel was created, and the taste for it unslaked. But Fielding was dead, Richardson had finished, Smollett was for the time compiling, and Goldsmith was still at the essay. *Tristram Shandy* was literally lapped up by the reading public. Sterne, going to town, found himself enjoying a triumph beyond his hopes. He had, we can see, long been thirsty himself; and his relish of applause is prodigious. Garrick and Reynolds, Chesterfield and Lyttelton, do him honour. He accepts a purse, and rejects a homily, from the bully Warburton; declining the task of 'castrating my book to the prudish humours of particulars.' He receives a compliment from the old Lord Bathurst; he goes to Court, and consumes much food and flattery everywhere. Wisely, he never tried to depict the great world. Like Miss Austen he knew just what he could do, and did it. *Tristram* might raise an outcry,[2] but nameless pamphlets, the censure of the serious, the disapproval of Goldsmith, only encouraged him to frisk on. Meantime, in his Puckish way, he issued a first volume of *Sermons of Mr. Yorick* (1760), which did not lessen his popularity.

The nine books of *Tristram Shandy* came out at intervals during a period of seven years (1760-7). Sterne's letters multiply at the same time, and are of the same whimsical texture as his works. The style and the posture are the same

in both. Sterne lives himself, so to say, into the character that he creates; he is Mr. Yorick, and the letters chronicle Mr. Yorick's progress. Meantime he was driven abroad by ill-health. In 1762 he paid his first visit to Paris; his fame went before him, and his second hour of glory arrived. He was the friend of Diderot, and the guest of D'Holbach. He had more flirtations, which led to little; he was painted by Carmontelle; and he was quite at his ease as a social lion. But the lion was sick, and had to make for the South.

The next phase lasts about two years. Sterne proceeded, accompanied now by his wife and daughter, by easy stages, gathering material. The seventh book of *Tristram* abruptly transports the scene to France. The actual pilgrimage is related in Sterne's letters. Then he came back alone to Paris, and, in the chapel of the British Embassy, preached his well-known sermon on King Hezekiah and the 'astronomical miracle' of the sundial; a subject on which he had a cheerful tilt with Hume at Lord Hertford's table. He reached England in 1764.

The fourth act, which covers about three years, is one of increasing ill-health; but Sterne all the same was uncannily active. Once home, and for the time a bachelor, he disported himself considerably. Scarborough and Bath, more flirtations, more letters, more preaching, and more *Tristram*, occupy the record. An imposing band of subscribers, French and English, desired again to see the humorist in his cap and bands; and in 1766 appeared Yorick's second volume of *Sermons*. Sterne had now set out on his more extensive tour, the 'true sentimental journey' on which he collected scenes and emotions for print. He repaired again to Paris, but thence made his way to Italy. At Florence he saw Walpole's friend, Sir Horace Mann, and at Naples sat for his bust to Nollekens.

The last scenes are in London, and are marked by the appearance of *A Sentimental Journey* and by the affair with Mrs. Eliza Draper. It is chronicled in Sterne's letters, and further in the *Journal to Eliza*, which was written during a few months of the year 1767. The lady, the young wife of an elderly Indian official, had sailed to join her husband, and the journal is dated after her departure. Sterne's restless philandering may by this time have been chiefly literary; but it goes to callous lengths. Once, in writing to Eliza, he speaks of the day, imagined or desired, when their two spouses shall be no more. But if the *Journal* exposes some of the waste products of Sterne's nature, he cannot be understood without it. In *A Sentimental*

Journey he is in full control of his art. It came out in 1768, the year of his death, which took place in his Bond Street lodgings. There seem to be grounds for the story that his buried body was stolen, taken to the dissecting-room, and there recognised: an occurrence more akin to the humour of Swift, or of Donne, than to his own. A caricature done at Florence in 1766 by Thomas Patch [1] had represented Death the skeleton entering, and holding before Sterne, whose arms are clasped, and his jaw fallen in dismay, an hour-glass that has run out. Beneath is a quotation from *Tristram*: 'and when Death himself knocked at my door.'

IV

There were some external causes for Sterne's singularity of temper. Until he was famous, he lived far from most of the literary sets. He seldom speaks of the writers of his day, greatly preferring Burton or *Le Moyen de parvenir*. He dwelt with 'old humorists, who have been long in their graves.' Thus immune and absorbed, he had watched life in Ireland, in his parish, and in the cathedral city, with myopic intensity. He also found inspiration in his company. Sterne was allied with Hall-Stevenson of Skelton, or 'Crazy,' Hall, and with his circle. The 'Demoniacks,' as they called themselves, were very coarse, rather drunken, rather mad, and rather absurd, but they were not without wit or reading. They had some ties with the much worse fellows of Medmenham Abbey, but were harmless in comparison. Hall-Stevenson's *Crazy Tales* (1762) show these characteristics, and contain a few apt rhymes. Here Sterne was in his element; and if his cloth did not befit the scene, that was part of the jest. Here he could be free; and possibly freedom of mind, as he understood it, was his ruling passion. The piety of his sermons appears to be genuine; but for most of the time he is the real pagan of his age, a man of God *pour rire*.

As already noted, Sterne's mind was deeply tinged by his reading. His literary 'sources' [2] have been extensively studied. When we ask if the study is worth while, we recall Goethe's remark that we might as well, in order to understand a man, inquire about the oxen, pigs, and sheep which he has eaten and which have invigorated him. Still, that is too hard a saying; and it is amusing to watch Sterne pillaging his favourite writers. This he does in their own cheerful humoristic spirit. John Ferriar in his *Illustrations of Sterne* (1798, 1812) revealed copious borrowings from Rabelais, Béroalde de Verville, and a crowd of others. Among British creditors Burton is foremost;

many a passage of *Tristram* is closely modelled on the *Anatomy of Melancholy*. Other inquirers have extended the list ; and it is clear that what Sterne loved was antiquarian fancy, which he could pass through his own alembic and reproduce with a strange new vapour of his own. If he seldom made his acknowledgments, neither had his models done so. The writers of the Renaissance were communists in respect of intellectual property.

It has been said with some force that Sterne liberated [1] the English novel. He certainly did his best to extricate it from the pulpit. Homely preaching is part of Defoe's stock-in-trade ; and we have seen how Richardson, Fielding, and Smollett, in different and often conflicting ways, had been moral and social campaigners. Not that their art always suffered in consequence ; to laugh men into decency is one of the old and proper aims of the comic writer. But there was room, and also need, for a more irresponsible kind of creation. The crowd of lesser novelists, to whom I shall turn presently, show that need more clearly than the masters ; for their morality is of a cheaper kind, and often turns us against itself. Sterne gains immensely by the absence of any such designs upon us. Instead he *feels*, ostentatiously and on principle : to feel is his only principle. All, then, depends on the quality of the feeling, and on its expression. But first may be noticed the surprising structure in which they are both enveloped.

V

In starting a book, says Tristram, ' I begin writing the first sentence—and trusting to Almighty God for the second.' The first volumes were a venture, closing with a hint that the public might have more if it wished. The public was eager ; and a half-promise was given, and fairly well kept, of producing two more volumes in every year. Several of the instalments are broken off in the midst of an episode, and almost of a sentence, in order to keep up expectancy. But in each instalment the confusion is carefully designed ; Sterne did not merely trust to providence. There is always, despite all the vagary, some sort of *pièce de résistance*, which provides continuous reading and relief. In the first two books the stage is set and all the chief players, except Widow Wadman, walk on at due intervals, in succession : the Walter Shandys, my uncle Toby, the midwife, Trim, Obadiah, and the man-midwife Slop. Tristram is there in a sense, busy getting born very slowly. Yorick is described at full length, but joins the circle afterwards. Sterne himself

is partly Tristram and partly Yorick. Tristram, with his inherited humours, the result of infantile accident, is clearly the man to write the book. We are not to ask how he could know the facts. Yorick, the parson-humorist, is the incumbent of Coxwold, prismatically tinted. Dr. Slop is a caricature of a real Yorkshireman, one Dr. Burton, a Roman Catholic; and Slop wakes up to protest against reflections on his church, while Corporal Trim reads out that sermon on *The Abuses of Conscience*, which Prebendary Laurence Sterne had in fact delivered at York. This sermon is supposed to be the solid course in the banquet; the chorus of interruption is the champagne, to make it go down. Other figures flit over the scene, wraiths who are not in the actual story. Eugenius is Hall-Stevenson; and 'my dear, dear Jenny' is identified, a charming fugitive voice, with Catherine de Fourmantelle, a professional singer to whom Sterne had proffered many sentiments.

In the third and fourth books there is the long, continuous, rather dreary tale of the stranger with the surprising proboscis, who rode through the streets of Strassburg. This is attached to the episode of Tristram's Nose, which is accompanied by the episode of the Name. In the fifth and sixth books comes the further episode of the Window-Sash; while, for staple, there is the long story of Le Fever. It is the best known of all, but is spoilt, amidst all its pathos, by an unpleasant fingering and posturing, which in Sterne is never far away. The seventh and eighth books relate the history of the king of Bohemia, wedged in among the impressions of Sterne's French tour. In the ninth he settles down to the long-promised affair of Widow Wadman; but ends abruptly, without completing the incident, and as though with an impudent gesture of the streets. But in the midst has come the last bid for 'sensibility,' the interlude of the mad lady, Maria. All this arrangement is planned, not casual or innocent.

VI

To pluck out a few coloured strands from *Tristram Shandy* is only to spoil the mazy pattern. There is the tale itself, with its embroideries; there are the stories woven into the interstices; and there is the mass of humoristic remark, always springing out of the stories, but wreathing and spiralling away irresponsibly. Digression is a cult of Sterne's, and may have been encouraged by his study of Swift. As in *A Tale of a Tub*, so in *Tristram*, we have a 'digression upon digressions.'

It gives us part of the author's theory of composition, and contains some of his lightest rhythms :

> Digressions, incontestably, are the sunshine ;—they are the life, the soul, of reading !—take them out of this book, for instance,—you might as well take the book along with them ;—one cold eternal winter would reign in every page of it ; restore them to the writer ; he steps forth like a bridegroom,—bids All-hail ; brings in variety, and forbids the appetite to fail.
>
> All the dexterity is in the good cookery and management of them. . . .

No recital, indeed, can exhaust their variety. Discourses on food and sleep, and on life and death ; the Latin curse of Ernulphus and the French pronouncement of the Sorbonne ; the pictures of the pathetic ass and of the distraught Maria : all are there, and they all stand at different distances from the main theme, like the excursions in an epic. Some are dragged in by the heels ; others shoot out from the story. The cutting of Dr. Slop's thumb incites the commination of Ernulphus, which reveals the radical and humorous impiety of the author. In book six, chapter forty, he inserts a puerile diagram of lines, every one of which, after sundry wriggles and curvets, returns to the straight. It is a fair symbol of the progress of his story. The main narrative is often resumed, after a long interval, wherever it left off, down to the very words. How, then, does Sterne tell his story when he gets to it, be it that of Tristram, or of Francis the First, or of the Abbess of Andouillets ?

While descanting, and wandering, and pirouetting, he sometimes sickens and wearies our suffering sense of order and reason. But let him come back to his scene, and he triumphs. His true power is in dialogue ; and his action moves by means of dialogue, interspersed with descriptions. The effect is that of a surprising parlour comedy, reproducing, though without dull realism, the shifts, interruptions, and harkings-back of actual talk, with the minutest notation of look and attitude from moment to moment ; and this, again, may be compared to directions called out by the 'producer' of the play. Sterne can get down by this procedure to the very quick of English idiom. Almost any page supplies an example :

> —Not that they are, properly speaking, Mrs. Wadman's premises, said my father, partly correcting himself—because she is but tenant for life—
>
> —That makes a great difference—said my mother.—
>
> —In a fool's head, replied my father.—
>
> Unless she should happen to have a child—said my mother. –

—But she must persuade my brother Toby first to get her one.—

—To be sure, Mr. Shandy, quoth my mother.—

—Though if it comes to persuasion—said my father—Lord have mercy upon them.

Amen: said my mother, *piano.*

Amen: cried my father, *fortissimè.*

Amen: said my mother again—but with such a sighing cadence. . . .

Half in whim, Sterne provides a theory for this kind of dialogue: it is nothing less than the 'association of ideas,' as explained by his favourite philosopher, Mr. Locke. 'The rapid succession of our ideas, and the eternal scampering of the discourse from one thing to another.' Every transition in our talk has its unseen hooks and eyes; let us expose them, quickly and delicately, by interruptions, dashes, musical terms (*piano*), at any rate somehow. Yet we must stop in time, and not 'sport too much with a man's own wit.' In a letter Sterne observes:

In general I have ever endeavoured to avoid it, by leaving off as soon as possible, whenever a point of humour or wit was started, for fear of saying too much.

Also there is the other theory of the 'ruling passion,' or 'hobby-horse.' Ideas may dance, and break, and flee, in apparent chaos, but they all come back, with my uncle Toby, to fortification; or, with his brother, to the influence exercised by Christian names on the character of the possessor. Many of Sterne's monkey-tricks with his printer, his blank pages, stars, and the like, are part of this notation; they are there to drop a hint, to interpret a look, to tantalise our interest, or to serve like a musical rest. His attention to gesture is noticed by all readers, and has left its trace on the English novel. The posture of Trim when he reads the sermon takes a page to describe. The following passage, from another scene, is typical:

—And how does your mistress? cried my father, taking the same step over again from the landing, and calling to *Susannah*, whom he saw passing by the foot of the stairs with a huge pincushion in her hand—how does your mistress? As well, said *Susannah*, tripping by, but without looking up, as can be expected.—What a fool am I! said my father, drawing his leg back again—let things be as they will, brother *Toby*, 'tis ever the precise answer. —And how is the child, pray?—No answer. And where is Dr. *Slop*? added my father, raising his voice aloud, and looking over the ballusters.—*Susannah* was out of hearing.

Of all the riddles of a married life, said my father, crossing the landing in order to set his back against the wall, whilst he propounded it to my uncle *Toby*— . . .

Thus the usual narrative styles are thrown to the winds ; the big epical manner of Fielding, the athletic stride of Smollett, are gone. There is a novel manipulation of language ; the pace, or *tempo*, of story-telling is changed, and is now much more leisurely. The illusion is given of actual movement :

Obadiah pulled off his cap twice to Dr. Slop ;—once as he was falling,—and then again when he saw him seated. . . .

Though this has taken up some time in the narrative, it took up little more time in the transaction, than just to allow time for Phutatorius to draw forth the chestnut, and throw it down with violence upon the floor. . . .

Sterne's habit is to show one or two central figures in sharp isolation, and in mental undress, reporting every twitch of their bodies and every flicker of their mood without scruple and without haste. He leaves no lifeless detail ; he builds up a living portrait out of seeming disorder and caprice. No doubt he can run a humour too hard. Every word of my uncle Toby on military affairs in Flanders is artfully placed ; yet it is possible to tire of Flanders. But this is a trifle, and we accept my uncle Toby as he is, with his placidity, and his innocence and lack of gall. It takes a true humorist to make so much mildness and goodness not insipid. Walter Shandy, ' much given to close reasoning upon the smallest matters,' is like one of Sterne's old authors, a pedant-fantast ; he has something of Burton in him, and is an amateur of curious and scholastic questionings. He shares some of the fancies of Sir Thomas Browne concerning matrimony, one side of which he finds trivial and undignified ; but he knows that man is a creature of habit. Sterne's best portrait is perhaps that of the apparently acquiescent Mrs. Shandy ; it is done in the fewest strokes, and we can almost count the words she utters. Trim, who says more, is not less distinct : he is the echo, but without servility, of his master. He is the link between the gentry and the kitchen ; and there, the figures of Susannah, of Bridget, and of the scullion who knew what it is to be alive and not dead, are distinct and vocal. What is more, they are all of the same *order* of reality. Sterne does not, like Dickens the greatest of his debtors, run off into caricature, unless it be in the case of Dr. Slop ; does not jostle real persons against creatures of the excited brain.

VII

Tristram Shandy is best if taken in small doses; *A Sentimental Journey* is more mercifully composed and can be, must be, read through all at once. The journey does not make much progress on the map, but it leaves a series of sharp unconfused impressions. The maudlin passages which hit the public so hard, and also stirred up mockery, are in point of form just as good as the rest. The ass and the starling are as distinct as the monk and the *fille de chambre*. There are no more Shandys; but the art, if possible, is now finer, and it is less interrupted. The scene of the *Journey* was another recommendation to its first readers. The French country, though much travelled and described, had never been watched by such extraordinary eyes. The grumbling and violence of Smollett are in comic contrast. Nor is the *Journey* only a string of surface impressions. It may be doubted if any one had ever yet told the French (and truly) that their national fault was to be *too serious*.

To enter into Sterne's vein of 'sentiment,' the reader must put off for the moment the whole armour of the English gentleman with his reserves and taboos. He must drop his dignity; Sterne has none. He must be ready and glad to weep, and to think that he is sincere in doing so. He must not be ashamed to advertise his shame over any real or fancied lapse in delicacy of behaviour. He must catch and fix every flying emotion, or its volatile essence will evaporate. And all the time, like Sterne, he must keep a true and genuine humanity alive. With one ingredient in Sterne's 'sentiment' every reader has to reckon. Humorous carnal innuendo is so pervasive in his pages that the most innocent remark is suspect. A good deal of it is probably in the nature of a *débauche cérébrale*. The memory, or fancy, turns everything into playful material. And in that memory, so we may fancy, sits the imp at play, noting every doubtful gesture, remembering every impious pulse, and all the while cool and amused, and making, again and again, some very disagreeable grimaces. Two things restrain Sterne, more or less. One is the law of the land against certain freedoms in writing; but a good craftsman, in a tolerant age, can evade that with merry ingenuity, heedless too of all the Warburtons. Another is the law of the language itself. Sterne's indelicacy is a good deal an affair of style; he can always find the right word, or the right silence, sure that posterity will not be too immaculate to listen, and that men want above all things to be amused.

I am sure, with regard to Discretion, though I have no great communications with her—I had always a regard for her at the bottom—she is a very honest woman; and I should be a brute to use her ill—only I insist upon it, she must not spoil good company.

Moreover, this particular thread cannot be torn away from the texture; it is connected with much that is wholly sane and kindly. Human nature, undistorted and undiseased, is there; and the mixture of desire, revulsion, frivolity, and affection in the average man is faithfully presented. Passion, naturally, is not in the question at all, or true romantic love.

VIII

Much of the writing in Sterne's sermons is of the plain eighteenth-century kind, without any tricks. Here too he borrowed boldly, and is said to have studied authors of the type of Tillotson. But he was also, as we know, steeped in the prose of the later English Renaissance; he reads Joseph Hall and Jeremy Taylor. He can write a long complicated sentence covering a page, and sprinkle it with many a conceit, or self-interruption, or second thought. Also, like South, he is a humorist in the pulpit. The result is a mixture of the stately and the freakish; no one can say where dignity ends and impudence begins; the congregation is kept in suspense, waiting to be made to jump. In the sermons there is, as we should expect, little force of thinking, and the high spiritual note is almost absent; but there is a play of studied fancy that sparkles like mica.

When he is so minded, Sterne can evolve an old-fashioned period of remarkable beauty. The well-known passage in *Tristram Shandy* upon sleep is an example. But the sermons are less familiar; and an extract from that on the Prodigal Son will show how memories of Taylor blend with the impish fancy of the speaker:

—The feasts and banquets which he gave to whole cities in the East,—the costs of Asiatic rarities,—and of Asiatic cooks to dress them,—the expenses of singing men and singing women,—the flute, the harp, the sackbut, and all kinds of music—the dress of the Persian courts, how magnificent! their slaves, how numerous!—their chariots, their horses, their palaces, their furniture, what immense sums they had devoured!—what expectations from strangers of condition! what exactions!

How shall the youth make his father comprehend, that he was cheated at Damascus by one of the best men in the world;—that

he had lent a part of his substance to a friend at Nineveh, who had fled off with it to the Ganges; that a whore of Babylon had swallowed his best pearl, and anointed the whole city with his balm of Gilead; that he had been sold by a man of honour for twenty shekels of silver, to a worker in graven images;—that the images he had purchased had profited him nothing;—that they could not be transported across the wilderness, and had been burnt with fire at Shushan;—that the apes and peacocks, which he had sent for from Tharsis, lay dead upon his hands; and that the mummies had not been dead long enough, which had been brought him out of Egypt—that all had gone wrong since the day he forsook his father's house?

Sterne, like Johnson, is thus a link in the somewhat slender chain that connects the eloquence of the seventeenth century with its conscious renewal by Lamb, De Quincey, and Coleridge. Lamb's early imitations of Burton continue the tradition. But Sterne's own accents, which seem to accompany the goblin portrait by Reynolds, are heard when the preacher comes to his favourite figure of adjuration, to his 'Hezekiah!' or 'Haste, Shimei!' and when the manner of *Tristram* invades the pulpit:

—Is a cloud upon thy affairs?—see—it hangs over Shimei's brow.—Hast *thou been* spoken for to the king or the captain of the host without success?—look not into the court-kalender—the vacancy is filled up in Shimei's face.—Art thou in debt?—though not to Shimei—no matter—the worst officer of the law shall not be more insolent.

Sterne handles the little springs and cogs of a sentence with the care of a watchmaker, the glass always at his eye. Like Congreve, he comes as near as may be to giving the pleasure of language *per se*, for its own sake; 'so nice his ear, so delicate his touch.' His vocabulary is a clear fount of English in the *Sentimental Journey*, or in the dialogue of Walter Shandy and Susannah over the name *Tristram-gistus*. Also, as the mood and speaker may require, or in his own comment, he writes learnedly, or uses old lost words, *facete contrivance*, or *contrist myself*, or, still more congenially, *concupiscible*. There is also the military or physiological diction that befits one or the other Shandy.

Sterne's bequest is not to be found in these devices, or in his zigzag method, or in his mockery of the proprieties, or in his exaltation of 'sentiment.' He loosened for good and all the conventions of the novel, in scope and temper, in style and matter. He showed the oddity, the cross-lights, of common scenes, of ordinary people, and of small events. We forget his contortions and blemishes, and the occasionally medicated air.

For his own purpose, he could do with words very much what he liked ; a juggler sometimes, but also a wizard.

IX

It may be doubted whether more than a dozen of the novels published between *Robinson Crusoe* and *Evelina* are widely read to-day ; and these, apart from the *Vicar of Wakefield*, are all by the four chief writers. Three by Fielding ; three by Smollett (*Roderick*, *Peregrine*, *Clinker*) ; two by Sterne ; and what of Richardson ? He has, I think, worn the worst of the four ; but *Clarissa*, at least, has a steady, if a smaller, public. Literary persons, of course, go much further ; but I speak of the unprofessional class, who read for pleasure and are proof against the historical interest, and for whom, after all, novels are written. In one way the judgment of the twentieth century is that of the eighteenth. The great quartet seem as far above the mob as they did in their own time. It remains to give some sketch of the writers who, though worth reading for our amusement, are seldom opened or reprinted. They do not fall into any obvious groups. Production was immense ; and ten or twelve of the most representative names must suffice. It is simplest to begin with three works of fantasy, mostly of the Utopian kind, which show no special sign of discipleship to contemporary writers. The first two may owe something to Defoe ; but the general pattern is that which is grafted in *Gulliver* upon the literature of sea travel. The method is to begin with a wayfarer's or sailor's log, the more literal the better ; to slide, without any change of voice, into a land of marvels ; and to drop at the close into matter of fact once more. In the midst may come the picture of an ideal, or a very strange, community, which is shocked and amazed to learn the ways of our world and of Georgian England.

Such a community is that of the ' Children of the Sun,' in the *Memoirs of Signor Gaudentio di Lucca* [1] (1737). The work, described as ' faithfully translated from the Italian, by E. T., Gent.,' has been credited to a priest named Simon Berington. There is a long prefatory flourish. The story, we are told, had been made over to the keeper of St. Mark's library in Venice by the secretary to the Inquisition. It had been related to that body by Gaudentio, a good Catholic, but was so strange that he was closely interrogated. For he reported, in the words of the title-page, the

discovery of an unknown country in the midst of the vast deserts of

Africa, as ancient, populous, and civilized, as the Chinese. With an account of their [*sic*] antiquity, origin, religion, customs, polity, etc. . . .

The inhabitants are sun-worshippers; but they recognise *El*, a spiritual deity above the sun, and the rational and moral ruler of the world. They have no revelation. This natural religion reads remarkably like the deism which in 1737 had just been assaulted by Butler; but the traveller is careful to dissociate his hosts from any such heresy. The Sunmen also believe that the wicked are punished in this world, either in their own person or in that of their descendants. Their government is patriarchal, or rather hieratic. As in the fairyland of William Morris, all are very beautiful, but all very much alike. Women rank high; and the pleasantest part of a narrative otherwise apt to be flat and circumstantial is the account of the ritual of courtship:

> If the man be the person the woman likes, he presents her with a flower just in the bud, which she takes and puts in her breast. If she is engaged before, she shows him one, to signify her engagement; which if in the bud only, shews the courtship is gone no further than the first proposal and liking; if half blown, or the like, 'tis an emblem of further progress; if full blown, it signifies that her choice is determined, from whence they can never recede; that is, she can change the man that presents it, but he can't challenge her till she has worn it publicly. If any dislike should happen after that, they are to be shut up, never to have any husband. If she has no engagement, but does not approve of the person, she makes him a low courtesy, with her eyes shut till he is gone away.

The Sun is everywhere the symbol; it is worn on dress, and a very large specimen adorns the breast of the 'Grand Pophar.' Once, when surprised, he exclaims, 'Great *Sun*, what can this mean?' Even the town-planning is solar: the temple is the centre of a series of concentric circles, and 'twelve great streets,' with their vistas, are the radii. The maidens wear

> moons of silver intermixt with their suns . . . the young virgins have the new moon; in the strength of their age the full moon; as they grow old, the moon is in the decrease proportionably. The widows have the moon expressed just as it is in the change.

There is no capital punishment, but adultery is punished with solitary confinement for life. A murderer is shut up 'with provisions to keep him alive as long as nature allows' (this is not held to be capital punishment). When dead, he is 'mangled just in the same manner as he killed the innocent,' and burnt; his ashes are taken up a mountain and 'tost up into the air.' It

will be seen that Berington has some invention and colour, and that his ' news from nowhere,' unlike many fictions of the kind, includes adequate police intelligence. He was soon forgotten, but is worth notice ; he catered for his public a few years before the great novelists had spoken.

X

There is a mild dose of propaganda even in the most alluring of all these imaginary voyages, *The Life and Adventures of Peter Wilkins,*[1] *a Cornishman, by R. S., a Passenger in the ' Hector '* (1751). The preface is signed by ' R. P.', Robert Paltock (1697-1767), of whom not much is known except that he was an attorney in Clement's Inn. R. P. tells us how he picked up R. S.,' an elderly man, labouring for life,' on a raft, befriended him on shipboard, and took down his story ; and how R. S. died on the night they landed in England. The book is dedicated to Elizabeth, Countess of Northumberland, from whom the attributes and graces of Youwarkee, says the author, are drawn. It was apparently little noticed at home, but was put into French and German within twenty years. Later critics, including Coleridge and Lamb, cherished *Peter Wilkins,* and Leigh Hunt expatiated on it with gusto. Paltock's debts to Swift and Defoe are palpable, but they only touch the accessories of his story. Youwarkee and her integument, and her kindred who are similarly clad, are all his own. Their appearance is skilfully prepared for, and put off for some time. The prelude is of the literal kind, and very well done. A truant youth leaves a wife and child behind him, goes to sea, fights the French, and is turned loose by his captors in a boat with some companions. Nearly all perish, after being driven to eat the dead :

> I will assure you, when we had once tasted, we looked on the blessing to be so great, that we cut and eat with as little remorse as we should have had for feeding on the best meat in an English market.

After reaching land Peter stays awhile with some amiable savages, ventures again to sea, and is at last wrecked alone on a desert isle, with the derelict ship conveniently near. He lodges in a twilit grotto, and much amusing Crusoe-business follows, and also Crusoe-moralising on the workings of Providence. Marvels occur, but not too thickly at first, and Peter like a good sailor is perplexed by them, yet not unduly excited. Nothing is much stranger to him than anything else. There

is a loadstone rock, a familiar property in tales of this kind, the old 'Rock Magnes.' He nets a water-monster, shaggy like a bear, snouted like a boar, with front fins like arms, which it 'waved and whirled about with incredible velocity' in order to stand upright, and with hind fins resembling the feet of a very large frog. He gathers a strange fruit shaped like a ram's horn, which boils down into a treacle. All this is creditable, but a schoolboy might imagine something of the sort; and the real wonder is still to come. 'The isle is full of noises,' which Peter for a while takes to be a dream and a delusion: strange unplaceable voices in the air, 'sometimes very loud,' and 'softer and more musical' than he had ever heard. But they prove to be those of the winged inhabitants of *Graundevolet*, the country of the *graundee*, who have flown from their distant land over the grotto. Who they are, and what the graundee is, Peter discovers through Youwarkee, the lovely *gawry*, or woman, who has become separated by an accident from her company. She is saved, and tended, and taken to wife by Peter. They live long together and rear a family in solitude; and the very device that we might expect to spoil the story, the introduction of a *Mrs.* Crusoe, makes its charm. Youwarkee is a human angel, never spectral or uncanny, and never sentimentalised: very capable, and of a delicate mind, and devoted to her wingless man. She also flies and swims to perfection, always by means of the graundee.

One of the plates in the book shows her afloat, nautilus-fashion; another shows her erect with open wings. They are as natural to her as limbs or dress; they are in fact her dress, made up of lissom ribs and supple membrane; and in a moment she can snap them impenetrably tight over her whole body. We come to feel that Peter and mankind generally, who lack these members, are in some way deformed at birth. It is a pity that he describes the graundee so elaborately, with all its anatomy; but Peter is a positive-minded fellow, who only wishes to explain. He is also a poet unawares, and knows how to dream. The scene in which he discovers the swooning Youwarkee, who has 'crashed' on the roof of his grotto, is a masterpiece. He has awakened from a dream in which he saw the face of Patty, the wife left behind in England, and he goes out to reconnoitre:

> I saw nobody: all was quite silent, and nothing that I could perceive but my own fears a-moving. I went then softly to the corner of the building, and there looking down, by the glimmer of my lamp which stood in the window, I saw something in human shape lying at my feet. I gave the word, 'Who is there?' Still no one

answered. My heart was ready to force a way through my side. I was for a while fixed to the earth like a statue. At length, recovering, I stepped in, fetched my lamp, and returning saw the very beautiful face my Patty appeared under in my dream; and not considering that it was only a dream, I verily thought I had my Patty before me; but she seemed to be stone dead.

The gawrys, and their men the *glumms*, though highly intelligent, and quite ready to fight upon occasion, are innocents. They are vegetarians, and have never even seen a fowl or a fish, in their half-magical abode. Here the story begins to flag, though entertaining matter is to come. Youwarkee's relations at last visit the couple, and Peter is persuaded to embark on an air-raft of his own devising, upheld by ropes and steered by glumms. He visits their land carrying guns and ordnance, is honoured by the king, exposes traitors, defeats rebels, and becomes a philosopher-ruler. This people worship a single God, *Collwar*, but more particularly adore his Great Image. Peter cures them of idolatry, slashes the image, and preaches at considerable length. Paltock, it would appear, was a strong Protestant, or perhaps a deist. The *ragans*, or priests, are firmly dealt with. The name of the king, significantly, is *Georigetti*, but there any likeness to George Augustus ends; for there is a treacherous queen-consort, who is detected by Peter and is quietly dropt down a live volcano. The diplomatic Peter then arranges for another queen. He further works at a Latin Bible, translates it 'into the Swangeantine tongue,' and teaches the ragans to read and write. At last he flies away on his raft, falls into the water, is picked up by 'R. P.', namely the author, and dies bequeathing him his story. He never gets back, therefore, to his Patty, of whom no more is heard. We linger over Paltock, whose tale was written about the same time as *Rasselas*, and wonder at his lightness of hand and cheerful simplicity.

XI

His dream-world, too, is perfectly coherent; it is not a crazy world at all; and this is more than can be said of the next fantasy-book. No queerer figure emerges from the blind alleys of literature than Thomas Amory, the author of the *Life and Opinions of John Buncle*,[1] *Esq.* No age, after all, was richer in eccentrics than that of 'prose and reason.' Who has an odder mind than Abraham Tucker or Laurence Sterne? Not Sir Kenelm Digby or Lord Herbert of Cherbury. We are always

being brought back to the age of learned extravagance and divagation; and Amory, perhaps, marks the extreme. The first volume of *John Buncle* appeared in 1756, when the author (who is said to have lived to the age of ninety-seven) seems to have been in his sixty-fifth year, and the second in 1766; the complete work, in four volumes, in 1770. But *John Buncle* was avowedly a sequel to another book, published in 1755, and now forgotten: *Memoirs Containing the Lives of Several Ladies of Great Britain*. Here the strange ingredients are much the same, though they are greatly diluted: and the two works may be considered together.

It is impossible to disengage the features of Amory from those of Buncle, which are, as it were, painted over them; and the external evidence is slight enough. Amory was an Irishman with a pedigree, though he seems not to have been born in Ireland. He or Buncle professes to have known Swift, and to have shared his rides; 'I have studied his soul,' he naïvely says, 'when he little thought what I was about.' All this may well be legendary. Amory also states that he threatened to publish an attack on a sermon of Swift's, which was of an unduly 'tritheistic'—that is to say Trinitarian—stamp. For Amory is a 'Christian deist,' or Unitarian, of a highly polemical order; he is, as one of his critics put it, 'Unitarian to a romantic degree.' His book would be shortened by much more than a half if the theological discussion were cut out. He exhausts himself in argumentation at the expense of the unbeliever, the papist, and the 'enthusiast.' Little is known of his career, save that latterly he lived near Hounslow, was judged to be peculiar, but a gentleman nevertheless, and was fond of stirring abroad in the evening 'like a bat.' We also hear that, like John Stuart Mill, 'he seemed always to be ruminating on speculative subjects, even while passing along the most crowded streets.' Unlike his hero with the seven wives, Amory married only once. We may perhaps credit him with the tastes that he assigns to Buncle, who

> read with extraordinary pleasure, before I was twenty, the works of several of the fathers, and all the old romances: which tinged my ideas with a certain piety and extravagance.

The *Memoirs* promise the biographies of no less than eighteen ladies; but in fact only provide those of the devout Mrs. Marinda Benlow. Whether she is a real or an imaginary figure is not clear. They occupy over one-third of the volume, and are chiefly notes of travel. *John Buncle* is only a novel by courtesy. In form, it is a variety of the 'life and adventures';

but it is in fact an unique and (if we exclude the preaching) a most preposterous and agreeable ragbag of incidents and discourses. Buncle is cast out by his father for his heresies, and commences vagabond. He wanders through whole counties, nominally Westmorland or Yorkshire, of purely mythical scenery; is lost in caves, stuck in swamps, befogged on mountains, and bundled down precipices; he often escapes by *poling* himself nimbly over the dangers. He describes such places with a mixture of precision and bombast, producing a sort of comic nightmare-effect. The contemporary horror of mountains becomes with Buncle an obsession. Usually, on emerging, he lights on a hermit, or on an ascetic community, or, much more frequently, on what he is fond of calling a 'glorious girl.' Seven of these heroines, as already noted, become his wives. In succession, it is true, though some of his critics most unjustly style him a 'Mormon.'

But to return to Harrogate. While I was there, it was my fortune to dance with a lady, who had the head of Aristotle, the heart of a primitive Christian, and the form of Venus de Medicis. This was Miss Spence of Westmorland.

The ladies contribute freely to the theological lucubrations. Also they are often strong in mathematics; one of them discusses the theory of fluxions, and whether Newton or Leibniz was the inventor. Others are only, but still are perfectly, mistresses of quadratic equations. They die off very rapidly, of the smallpox or other ailments, or by some accident. This is the feature of the book most frequently quoted; and a brief passage will show more than one aspect of Amory's peculiar humour. After the death of Antonia, the third wife, Buncle observes:

Four days I sat with my eyes shut, on account of this loss, and then left the Lodge once more, to live if I could, since my religion ordered me to do so, and see what I was next to meet with in the world. As grief sat powerfully on my spirits, and if not dislodged, would have drank them all up very soon, I resolved to hasten to Harrogate, and in the festivities of that place forget my departed partner as soon as I could. I laid my Antonia by my Charlotte and my Statia, and then rode off. What happened at the Wells, and the observations I made there, and thereabout, the reader will find shortly narrated.

As I mention nothing of my children by so many wives, some readers may perhaps wonder at this, and therefore, to give a general answer, once for all, I think it sufficient to observe, that I had a great many, to carry on the succession; but as they never were concerned

in any extraordinary affairs, nor ever did any remarkable things, that I heard of; only rise and breakfast, read and saunter, drink and eat, it would not be fair, in my opinion, to make any one pay for their history.

John Buncle has often and with some reason been called a mad book; it is by no means so clear that the writer was a madman. He has his tongue in his cheek for a great part of the time. When he likes, he can describe in a matter-of-fact, vivid, and almost sober fashion. His account of Harrogate and its eccentrics is quite as sane as much of *Tristram Shandy*; and he has the knack of coming to earth with a sharp realistic stroke in the midst of effusion and declamation. The close of *Buncle*, addressed to the critics, is pleasantly mischievous:

I have only to add, that I wish . . . your garments may be always white and odoriferous; but especially, may you press on, like true critics, towards perfection; and may bliss, glory, and honour be your reward and your portion.

XII

Among the other whimsical not to say crackbrained novels that bespeckle the age of good sense, the *Fool of Quality* [1] (1766), by Henry Brooke (?1703-1783), is conspicuous. It is often named in the company of *John Buncle*, but its cast of oddity is quite different. It is written in earnest, and in the cause of benevolence and charity, and it is swathed in sentiment. The hero, Harry Clinton, seems at first to be a mischievous parody of Sir Charles Grandison, a Grandison in a boy's tunic. He is, like the knight, an athlete; a resistless boxer and wrestler, he has only to 'put out a foot' to send an opponent sprawling. Also, facing a six-barred gate, he

catched at the upmost bar with his left hand, and, throwing himself slightly over, opened the gate for his companions. The earl and Mr. Meekly stood mute in utter astonishment. At length the earl cried,—'Child, you must surely be of more than mortal mould, or else you have a familiar spirit that conveys you through the air.' Harry smiled, but was silent.

Also he tripped up a mad dog, and 'descended upon him with all the force of his heels.' All this is to the good; but Harry's moral ascendency, as he grows older, is not less marked. In the end he bandies compliments with that usually impervious monarch, William the Third:

'O sire!' said Harry, 'I am but as a bird from the nest, and this is the first of my unfledged excursions.'—'If a bird,' cried the king,

'it must be a young eagle.'—'Not so, sire,' answered Harry, 'I should then better support the brightness of the sun that is now before me.'—'I would give one of my kingdoms that you were my son.' . . .

Henry Brooke, when he printed his romance, had passed sixty, though he seems, like his hero, to have the imagination of sixteen. Fisticuffs and hoaxes delight him, and abound in his pages; and a singular, lively sort of childishness runs through the *Fool of Quality*. It is not a parody at all. There is no plot, only the chronicle of Harry's philanthropy and chivalry; but from this sprout forth a score of episodes and anecdotes. Harry is the 'fool of quality.' The younger son of the Earl of Moreland, he is discarded in favour of the petted heir, and despised for his incurable generosity of temper. He is taken up by his father's brother, who is equally despised (for having gone into trade), and who is now a wealthy gentleman, known as Mr. Fenton. Under the auspices of Mr. Fenton, whose painful Odyssey forms one of the longer episodes, Harry starts as almoner-in-general to the poor and oppressed. He is equipped with ample funds and many counsels, and scatters both with Oriental profusion. Much of the book is a record of the sufferings thus relieved. Here, indeed, comes the parting of the ways from Richardson. Sir Charles Grandison is a cheerful though a somewhat sanctimonious giver; but that is only one of his perfections, which are commended less for their own sake than as the attributes of a Grandison. Harry Clinton goes about like a little Oglethorpe or Howard. The emphasis is laid on the needs of the poor and oppressed, and on the callousness of social institutions. Harry does not do much except dole out money right and left; and he is washed in the grateful tears of his beneficiaries and admirers, not to mention his own. There is more water shed in the pages of the *Fool of Quality* than in any other English novel of mark. Harry visits the debtors' gaol, and sets wretches free; and some of their stories are told with skill and sympathy. One scene may well have given a hint to Charles Dickens. The brutal schoolmaster, Mr. Vindex, has in him something of Squeers, and something of Mr. Jingle. During Harry's pupilage, Vindex had, we hear, wielding his rod and ferrule, given 'a free scope to the surly terrors of his station'; and his scholars had turned on him and rent him. Now, long afterwards, Harry comes upon Mr. Vindex in the Fleet, a ruined man; and Brooke's peculiar shade of 'sentiment' is best conveyed by an extract:

He was so pale and shabby, and so fallen away, that I did not rightly know him till I looked at him very earnestly. My heart then

began to soften and warm towards the poor man; for it told me that something very sorrowful must have happened, before he could have been brought to that condition. So I went up to him with a face, I believe, as melancholy as his own.

'How do you do, good Mr. Vindex?' said I. 'I should be glad to see you, if I did not see you look so sad.' He then stared at me for some time, and at length remembering me, he looked concerned, and turned away to shun me; but I took him lovingly by the hand, and said—'You must not leave me, Mr. Vindex; won't you know your old scholar, Harry Fenton?'—'Yes,' says he, casting down his mournful eyes, 'I know you now, master; I know I used you basely, and I know why you are come; but reproach me and insult me as much as you please, all is welcome now, since I cannot lie lower till I am laid in the earth.'

'I do not mean to insult you; this tear will witness for me that I do not mean to insult you, my dear Mr. Vindex'; and so I wiped my eye. 'Here are twenty guineas to put warm clothes upon you in this cold weather. Little and low as I am myself, I will try to do something better for you; and so give me one kiss in token that we are friends.'

The poor dear man then opened his broad eyes in a wild stare upon me, with a look that was made up half of joy and half of shame. . . .

Brooke appeared in the wake not only of Richardson but of Sterne. In 1766 the last volume of *Tristram Shandy* was due for publication. But there are many things in *Tristram*—and also in the *Old Curiosity Shop*—more mawkish than the passage quoted; it has its pathos, and its language is deliberately naïf—suited to a 'boy of sentiment' who slightly overdoes his emotions. Sterne unluckily also set an example of discursiveness. The *Fool of Quality* is for ever being interrupted by conversations between the 'author' and a 'friend,' or by essays on theology, on the science of physiognomy, and on the British constitution. These are not nutritious, but they are easy to avoid. The ending is of the older sham-romantic kind. Persons die; some of their coffins are of 'unalloyed and beaten silver.' Harry comes into the title and is Earl of Moreland. His wife is, indeed, the daughter of the Emperor of Morocco, but is quite white, and her mother is an English lady, a kinswoman of Harry himself. Such historical clues help to account for the medley in the *Fool of Quality*; but the result has a savour of its own, and comedy, though not always intended, is never far off.

The versatile Brooke also tried his hand at poetry, tragedy, and fable, although only his novel has lived—and that in the twilight. He made a name, partly through an accident, by his tragedy *Gustavus Vasa*, which was printed in 1739 'as it was to

have been acted ' at Drury Lane. Was to have been ; for, when all was prepared, it was inhibited, and the author made his gains by printing it. Trollio, the Mephistophelean adviser of Cristiern of Denmark, was supposed to resemble Walpole. The likeness is not evident ; for Sir Robert, whatever his failings, did not suborn a political prisoner to murder his, Sir Robert's, best friend and carry off his mistress. Arvida, in the play, is thus persuaded (though he is undeceived in time) to turn upon his master Gustavus, who has rallied an army in secret to overthrow the usurper. The piece is absurd and rhetorical, but has more spirit than most tragedies of the age, and there are faint echoes of the older poetic diction. But Brooke, whether here or in his *Earl of Essex* (1750), cannot escape from that bastard style which so curiously blighted the tragic muse. A really sentimental Queen Elizabeth, with no sense of humour, is a contradiction in terms. Brooke made more tragedies ; but he did better in the four pieces which he contributed to Edward Moore's rather insipid *Fables for the Female Sex* (1744), and his *Temple of Hymen* is one of the best things in a painfully vapid kind.

XIII

Adventures in Search of a Real Friend, through the Cities of London and Westminster, by Henry Fielding, Esq., Author of Tom Jones, &c., &c. : so runs the impudent title-page of a volume dated 1822, printed by S. Cave and published by G. Virtue ; a short life of Fielding is prefixed. The page-heading is *The Adventures of David Simple* ; the book, under that title, was first published in 1744 ; and the unnamed author was Miss Sarah Fielding, sister of the novelist, and the correspondent, admiring and admired, of Richardson. It followed in the wake of *Pamela* and *Joseph Andrews*. It would hardly have been named so often in the literary histories but for the surname of the writer. But Miss Fielding has a thread of talent. Sainte-Beuve enjoins us, when we are laying siege to a great writer and trying to understand him, to study his brothers and sisters. Perhaps a generous trait of the Fielding family can be traced in such a paragraph as this :

> David, who had more of what Shakespeare calls the *milk of human kindness*, than any other among all the children of men, perceived by her manner of behaviour all that must pass in her mind, and was much less able to comfort her, than what is generally called a *good-humoured man* would have been : for his sensations were too strong,

to leave him the free use of his reason, and he stood some time without knowing what to do. At last, he recollected himself enough to beg her to dry her eyes, saying, it would be the utmost injury to her brother, to continue in those agonies which seeing her in that condition must unavoidably cause. That thought immediately roused her, and suddenly stopped her gushing tears.

Richardson, we may surmise, might not have permitted so sudden a 'stoppage.' But his general influence on *David Simple* is evident, in the effusion of sentiment, in the analysis of women's misfortunes, and in the copybook, sometimes infantile, character of the moralising. The main idea is not very hopeful. David is a well-to-do young man, who is and remains a simpleton, though a very benevolent one, and whose credulity is very slowly, if ever, enlightened by experience of the world. He rescues distressed damsels, one of whom, after due suspense, he marries; and at last he also finds a man who is his 'real friend.' The book is only a string of little tales, some of them nested within other tales; but it contains some pathos and chivalrous feeling of a gentle kind, and some observation. The Dorimenes and Isabelles who suffer and are righted are lineal, though middle-class, descendants of the long-winded heroines in the prose romances. There is also a villainous stepmother, elaborately drawn, who disseminates a black charge against her husband's son and daughter; but there was not enough gall in Miss Fielding's ink for this kind of subject. More notice is due to another of the stories which would not have been written, or if written would have been different, but for the existence of *Pamela* and *Clarissa*.

In the *Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph, Extracted from her Own Journals*, a story which was well regarded by Johnson and Charles James Fox, the handiwork, if old-fashioned, is unusually close and ingenious. It is one of the best arranged among the lesser novels of the time. The first three volumes, published in 1761, are complete in themselves; and the sequel, dated five years later, fills two volumes more. The author was Mrs. Frances Sheridan,[1] the wife of Thomas Sheridan the player, and the mother of Richard Brinsley Sheridan; the heritage of wit in this family is well known. She admired Richardson, consulted him, dedicated her book to him, and was in a sense his follower. As her title shows, the method resembles that of *Pamela*. Sidney Bidulph's journal is the staple, and by sundry strained devices letters between other parties are woven into it. But Mrs. Sheridan took warning from the prolixity of her master, and remarked that in Richardson's novels

'the bookseller gets the better of the author.' She is careful to be concise, and unfolds an intricate plot with almost legal clearness. Her sentiment, though pitched high in the crucial scenes, is not long-drawn-out, and it does not, like so much of *Clarissa*, tend to nauseate. Johnson's frequently quoted remark to Mrs. Sheridan, that he did not know 'if she had a right to make her readers suffer so much,' has more than one edge to it; it reminds us of his shrinking from the extremes of tragic suffering in Shakespeare. As her novel still awaits and deserves a reprint and is known only to students, a longer account of it may be allowed. It is a comedy of intrigue, with a half-tragical ending.

Sidney Bidulph's father is dead, and she is left with a good mother of rigid principles who is ignorant of the world. A match is arranged with one Faulkland Orlando Faulkland (what a name !), who appears to be a paragon; and it is a love-match. But it is broken off just in time. Faulkland is found, according to all appearance, to have wronged a young woman, a Miss Burchell, who has borne a child that is thought to be his. It is hinted that there are mitigating circumstances; but Sidney, though she cannot forget her Orlando, and is puzzled over the Burchell affair, accepts, in a very business-like spirit, a Mr. Arnold who is well-to-do, devoted, and uninteresting. Orlando, of course, reappears; and now enters the siren of the piece, Mrs. Gerrarde, who is a widow and also Miss Burchell's aunt. She forms a tortuous and adroit plot, by which at one stroke she captivates Mr. Arnold and persuades him that his wife has compromised herself with Faulkland. Arnold quits Sidney brutally and the home is broken up. Here comes the difficult corner, which Mrs. Sheridan gets round with much address. An abstract may scarcely carry conviction; but the story is made credible.

Orlando, whom we have never quite disliked, comes out in a new character. He has found out Mrs. Gerrarde's manœuvres. Indignant and generous, he counterplots, in order to make the Arnolds happy. His diplomacy is unscrupulous, but it works. By an elaborate trick he kidnaps Mrs. Gerrarde, and, without committing himself verbally, leads her to think that he will either marry her or 'protect' her. His aim, however, is only to undo her mischief. He knows that she cares only for money, and he is ready to pay her. A masterly dialogue follows in which he induces her to write a dictated letter confessing her misdeeds. This secured, he undeceives her; and, when her rage is spent, marries her off, well-endowed and not ill-content,

to his own French servant, whom she supposes to be a gentleman. So the lady vanishes from the scene. We are not exactly told to admire Orlando for this procedure, and we do not; but the Arnolds are reunited, and for a time happy. Then Arnold dies, having by a turn of fortune lost his money. A rival heir has been put forward, whose paternity has to be settled by a very delicate calculation of dates: an issue which Mrs. Sheridan states with precision, though in the most ladylike language. Sidney is left a widow and in straits, with her children.

Soon she is enriched again, by a cousin, a stage nabob, a Mr. Warner, who tests her kindness by the good old method of appearing in mean attire and asking alms. Sidney gives her mite, while her blunt and rough brother Sir George and his callous Lady Sarah turn away the petitioner. Sir George is very well drawn; these scenes are good comedy of their sort, and we hear that they were effective in the dramatised version of the novel. Sidney is now free; and why should she not take her Faulkland after all? why, because of the prior claim of the disastrous Miss Burchell. We are made to believe that Sidney, an honourable Quixotic soul, would and could prevail on Faulkland to marry his former 'victim.' But her quixotism is fatal; the victim had always been a deceiver, and indeed far from innocent in the original affair. Faulkland finds her with a lover, and shoots her. Events now follow with hectic speed, and the finale is badly huddled up. Sidney, at this crisis, sticks by Faulkland, and marries him; but luckily they part on the wedding day. For the shot lady is not dead after all! Faulkland in despair dies, it is surmised by his own hand, but Sidney lives on. Years pass, and the story is continued into the next generation. Here Mrs. Sheridan untangles her skein as cleverly as ever, but we take a milder interest in the abductions and deathbeds of her sequel. *Sidney Bidulph* is a good specimen of the dexterous fiction which can be found, and which was applauded, while the great performers were at work.

Mrs. Sheridan certainly has the knack of springing a surprise. Her pseudo-Eastern fable, *The History of Nourjahad* (1767), uses a Rip van Winkle device in order to enforce the trite moral of the vanity of riches. A genie promises Nourjahad endless youth and endless gold, but warns him that he may expect to fall into trances lasting for weeks or years. Thus the houris whom he left young and beautiful have become wrinkled hags when he awakes. Nourjahad is duly chastened; but he finds that the gold, the genie, the houris, and the trances are all a

practical joke on the part of the Sultan, who has tried him until he is shown worthy to inherit the throne. Looking back, we find that we had missed certain hints, sprinkled for our benefit, that all was not as it seemed. This deftness is less apparent in the absurd plot of one of Mrs. Sheridan's comedies, *The Discovery*, played at Drury Lane, and printed in 1763 ; but it is a vivacious thing, and can still be read. There is a giddy married couple, the Flutters, who rail each other out of amity and into it again ; and there is a formal pedantic lover, who was played by Garrick. The transiency of the actor's craft comes home to us, and we hear the ghosts of buried laughter ; we would like to have heard Garrick's elocution in answer to the cheerful Mrs. Knightly, who exclaims :

Bless me ! why, sure, Sir Anthony, you would not offer to kiss me ! *Sir Anthony.* O Heavens, madam, kiss you ! Madam, let me take the liberty to inform you, that since I could distinguish between virtue and vice, I never took so unwarrantable a freedom with any lady upon the face of the earth !

There is a neat prologue to *The Discovery*, presumably written by the authoress, upon the right of women to be clever in print : a claim which even in that age of learned ladies had still to be upheld. The men think it high treason, and

> Then try the vile monopoly to hide
> With flattering arts : ' you, ladies, have beside
> So many ways to conquer—sure, 'tis fit
> You leave to us that dangerous weapon, wit ! '
> For women, like state criminals, they think,
> Should be debarred the use of pen and ink.

And the conclusion reflects *one* of the recurring moods of the century :

> But fancy's pictures float upon the brain,
> And short-lived o'er the heart is passion's reign,
> Till judgment stamp her sanction on the whole,
> And sink th' impression deep into the soul.

There is more force, despite another ragged plot, in *The Dupe* (1764). Here the comedy is grimmer. Mrs. Sheridan boldly lays her scene in a bad house, and lodges her heroine therein as the innocent guest of her uncle's mistress. The spluttering, foolish uncle, Sir John Woodall, is the ' dupe.' There is an abduction, the purpose of which is baffled by a jealous woman who betrays the culprit. In the end Sir John is undeceived, and pays for his experience ; and some of the villains are forgiven. This unsparing little play is relieved by the talk of a Mrs.

Friendly, who is an ancestress (whether or no Charles Dickens was aware of it) of Mrs. Nickleby, and who rambles admirably, just when she is required to give important information. Mrs. Sheridan's fragment of comedy, *A Journey to Bath*,[1] was never played, and remained unprinted till 1902. It was known to her son, who found in it more than one perversion of speech for his Mrs. Malaprop; and it adds another item to the long tale of the humours of Bath. There are needy titled swindlers, a faithful simple heroine who resists their wiles, a youth whose head they turn, and a citizen's lady who flutters round them.

XIV

The cheap machinery of the *Adventures of an Atom* had already been used in Charles Johnstone's *Chrysal*,[2] *or, The Adventures of a Guinea* (1760-5) 'by an adept.' Here the speaker, the inanimate thing, is the guinea, which passes from pocket to pocket, describes its successive owners, and relates the story to the 'adept'—himself a most superfluous figure. *Chrysal* gave offence, and was meant to offend, and indeed is still offensive; but it is not brainless, and it is a singular document. Much of the satire, in the more tedious chapters, is political; it is aimed at corruption in high places, and at most of the public men of the fourth and fifth decades. Other passages present, in their disguise, Sir Francis Dashwood, Lord Sandwich, and other figures of the 'Hellfire Club.' *Chrysal* is one of the chief 'authorities' for the fables or facts concerning that fraternity; and here may be read the tale of Wilkes introducing the baboon among the scurrying revellers. There is also a shameful and sharply etched caricature of Whitefield, as a hypocrite and associate of loose persons; one of whom, a wicked old hag, delivers herself at length. The scene is suggested by Foote's *Minor*; and Foote himself, as 'Momus,' appears elsewhere, mimicking two of his victims in their presence. 'Every passion of the human heart was printed in his face so strongly that he could at pleasure display it in all its force.' These imaginary interviews show that Johnstone had his share of the *vis comica*. Garrick is heard, breaking in careful phrases to author after author the news that their dramas will not do. Churchill extorts fifty guineas from a bookseller for a poem still unseen, and receives a good word: he is 'an author, the boldness and beauty of whose writings had for some time engaged the public attention.' What little we know of Johnstone (? 1719-? 1800) himself is of late or anonymous authority. He seems to

have been a deaf Irish barrister, whose book was for a while much in vogue, who wrote other books that failed, and who later went to India and there prospered.

This hybrid variety of the vagrant novel can be much more pleasing when the *picaro*, though not a human being, is yet alive and intelligent. One of the sprightliest little chronicles of the time, which preceded those of the guinea and the 'atom,' is of this species. Little is known of Francis Coventry except that he was a Cambridge man of Pepys's college, Magdalene, and that he was an acquaintance of Gray; who read in 1751, the year of its publication, the anonymous *History of Pompey*[1] *the Little, or, The Life and Adventures of a Lapdog*. The story was justly popular. The 'bookseller,' in Hurd's *Moral and Political Dialogues* (1759), exclaims to the 'editor,' who is trying to sell him that work, 'Yes, novels, if you please. Another *Pompey the Little*, and I 'd say something to you.' Gray wrote to Walpole that it was the 'hasty production' of a young clergyman, Mr. Coventry, and that he had detected the authorship because three of the characters were those of a comedy which Francis Coventry had shown to him. Nothing more is known of this comedy. Pompey, we are informed, was born at Bologna on the 25th of May (New Style), 1735, and was 'gathered to the lapdogs of antiquity' on the 2nd of June, 1749, in England. Here he passes most of his fourteen years, with many changes of fortune. He sees high and low life in turn. He begins as the pet of a light lady in Bologna, who parts with him to her gallant for a gold watch. The gallant comes home retailing the art jargon of the traveller, and can criticise a portrait in the approved style: 'the costume ill preserved, the contours harsh, the *ordonnance* irregular!' Pompey is now cherished by a lady of fashion, and fed on chicken; the servants, as they wait at table, wink and sneer at such wastefulness; and there is a vivid report of their gross comments in the kitchen. Pompey is now a 'dog of the town, and shines in high life.' Next he is lost, stolen; and suffers persecution and hardship. He is tortured by children; he sees many a squalid 'interior'; he is present at a night scene in which bedrooms are mistaken and which reminds us of a certain inn at Upton-on-Severn where Tom Jones had an adventure. Indeed, Coventry studied and admired Fielding, and dedicated his fourth edition, of 1752, to him. Pompey is soon presented to a poor poet by a heartless patron in lieu of the necessary guineas. The poet's table is described:

> There were now lying upon it the first act of a comedy, a pair of

yellow stays, two political pamphlets, a plate of bread and butter, three dirty nightcaps, and a volume of miscellaneous poems. The lady of the house was drowning a leg of mutton, as before observed, in meagre soup, and the two daughters sat in the window, mending their father's brown stockings with blue worsted.

This is like one of Hogarth's plates. Many other characters are encountered by Pompey, including two Cambridge dons. One is a Master of Arts, and we read, after the manner of the *Spectator*, 'a day's journal of his actions,' from his dressing-table to his bed. The careful costume, the chapel, the long breakfast, the morning ride, the dinner for which a 'fresh-powdered wig' is assumed, the common-room, the coffee-house, the tea-party, the second chapel, and the evening call, eat up the day to the detriment of study. The other personage is an ancient untidy Doctor, whom his old crony, forgetting the lapse of time, has asked, to his dismay, to squire two ladies over the University. Pompey, when in his worst surroundings, is comforted by a philosophic cat of high descent, Mopsa, with whom he strikes up a friendship. She, we hear, is the sister of the Selima who had been drowned in a vase of goldfish and lamented in an 'ingenious little ode.' Coventry seems to have felt that he was hardly writing a story, for on one occasion he soundly remarks:

> And now that we have drawn the characters of so many people, let us look a little into their actions; for characters alone afford a very barren entertainment to the reader.

And he describes the books of 'this life-writing age':

> The lowest and most contemptible vagrants, parish girls, chambermaids, pickpockets and highwaymen, find historians to record their praises, and readers to wonder at their exploits: star-gazers, superannuated strumpets, quarrelling lovers, all think themselves authorised to appeal to the public and to *write apologies* for their lives.

XV

Many a stream issued from the wells of sentiment which Richardson and Sterne had tapped. Little Nell, and Colonel Newcome, and a hundred melancholy figures more, are of the true Sternian breed. His immediate influence was marked: there were imitations and sequels of *A Sentimental Journey*. But his best known and most gifted disciple was Henry Mackenzie (1745-1831), whose *Man of Feeling*[1] (1771) still keeps a shadowy celebrity. In Sterne the poise between humour and pathos is on a razor-edge, and is too often upset;

in Mackenzie there is a permanent overbalance. A mop is positively required to wipe up the floods of tears that are shed on the smallest pretext. Deathbeds, too, are unreasonably numerous. Yet the *Man of Feeling* is also in debt to Fielding and Goldsmith, and is not entirely to be mocked at. The hero is one Harley, and the book consists of fragmentary passages in his life, which are supposed to have been culled from his manuscripts. Some of the chapter headings will give a notion of the medley :

' The man of feeling in love.'—' He visits Bedlam.'—' He leaves London : characters in a stage-coach.'—' The emotions of the heart.'

Harley refutes the saying that ' men have died, and worms have eaten them, but not for love.' In a scene which is a barefaced reminiscence of Sterne, he dies in his bed rhetorically, before the eyes of the lady who is promised to another. But there are some sharp etchings in the book ; and the best of them, as Mrs. Barbauld noted, represents the invasion of a happy family, playing blind-man's-buff at Christmas-time, by a brutal press-gang who carry off their father into the night. The swindlers, who trade on Harley's boasted skill in physiognomy, are alive ; for Mackenzie, following Richardson, likes to throw in a little rough realism in the intervals of assaulting the feelings.

The same device is found in the *Man of the World* (1773), a longer, and this time a coherent, story, with no lack of melodrama. The ' man of the world,' Sindall, is an early specimen of the wicked baronet (why has a baronet always been more dangerous than a simple knight ?). But he is a dummy, and the relieving virtues which are meant to make him credible have the opposite effect. The history of the virtuous family whom Sindall ruins is carried through two generations, and the most theatrical scene, in which he is only just prevented from doing violence to his unknown daughter, is startling enough after so many lachrymose pages. But the wanderings, shipwrecks, and hardships of the young Annesley are vividly told ; and the Cherokees, amongst whom he stays, are not sentimentally portrayed. There is enough to show that Mackenzie could write like a man, when he could shake off the influence of the studio.

Not that his study of Sterne was altogether for evil. He learned, for one thing, what to avoid. He eschewed his master's tricks of broken speech and whimsical typography, and he does not lead his reader a dance through bush and through briar. In the miniature-work of conversation and description he proves

himself an apt pupil. The overture of *Julia de Roubigné* (1777) would hardly have been written but for the *Sentimental Journey*, and yet is no mere *pastiche*. Roubigné, an impoverished gentleman, hears from his old servant an account of the mansion which the family had been forced to leave :

> Old Lasune's house, where you, miss (turning to me), would frequently stop in your walks, was pulled down, except a single beam at one end, which now serves as a rubbing-post to some cattle that graze there ; and your roan horse, sir, which the marquis had of you in a present, when he purchased Belville, had been turned out to grass among the rest, it seems : for there he was, standing under the shade of the wall ; and when I came up, the poor beast knew me, as any Christian would, and came neighing up to my side as he was wont to do. I gave him a piece of bread. . . .

This 'poor beast' is more satisfactory than Sterne's dead donkey. The 'miss' is Julia, whose memories of Belville are further clouded by the thought of her Savillon, who is now away in the West Indies, and who (as she hears erroneously) is now to be married. So she accepts the grave and honourable but unbending Count de Montauban, in gratitude ; he has saved her father from ruin. The author warns us that 'it is not so much on story, as on sentiment, that the interest with the reader must depend'; and Julia herself observes, 'in truth, my story is the story of sentiment.' And it is a poor story, with a strong dose of sensationalism. Savillon comes back ; Julia is persuaded in all innocence to see him; the husband unjustly suspects, poisons Julia, and then on discovering his mistake poisons himself. The catastrophe is a stupid accident, but the narrative is more efficient and rapid than in Mackenzie's other tales. The book is in letter form, and the three principal actors, Julia, Savillon, and Montauban, limn themselves clearly enough. When Savillon, in his wanderings, meets a noble savage slave, whose bearing leads him to exclaim, 'This man has been a prince in Africa!' we remember that we are in the age of Rousseau, though not yet in that of Chateaubriand.

Mackenzie lived on till 1831, an honoured veteran through the lifetime of Scott; but he belongs to the late eighteenth century. Scott pays a tribute to his lecture, given in 1788, on German literature. He was something of a chameleon, hardly an original writer. Sentiment by no means absorbed him ; his chosen friends included hard-headed Scottish judges like Lord Abercromby, Lord Hailes, and Sir Robert Bannatyne ; and he had a dry sharp eye for manners and humours. These legal notables were his partners in the two periodicals, the *Mirror*

(1779-80) and the *Lounger* (1785-7), which were the first imitations of the *Spectator* to appear in Scotland. They are, naturally, somewhat monotonous ; but they have their interest as containing, long before the Waverley Novels, many traits of citizen manners in the Lowlands. Mackenzie still deals in ' sensibility ' ; and in the *Mirror* (Nos. 42-44) can be found the fiction of the unhappy La Roche and his daughter, who are imagined to have for escort the philosopher David Hume. The features of Hume himself, though glorified, are distinct ; and it is strange to find him in this Sternian company. The tale, in its own style, is well told ; and some of the other *Mirrors* have the same superabundance of feeling. But there is also a revulsion against effusiveness ; and we read little story-sermons on the risks of over-romantic feeling in young ladies. One other paper by Mackenzie, No. 97 of the *Lounger*, is remembered ; it is in praise of the ' heaven-taught ploughman ' whose poems had come out the year before Kilmarnock. They are quoted with enthusiasm ; but Mackenzie, for choice, dwells on those in which the English idiom predominates. In the same patriotic vein Professor Richardson of Glasgow commends Hamilton of Bangour. But these are excursions ; and the staple of the *Mirror* and the *Lounger* is still the ' character.' The series is held together by the figure of a Mr. Umphraville, an ingenious but shrewd observer of the fashionable and the rustic world, with something in him of Mr. Spectator, and of Sir Roger too.

XVI

The vogue of the French romances, like that of the heroic plays, died hard, and the bibliographies record many of their bastard offspring, who were born even after the true novel had appeared. In 1752 it was still possible for a burlesque of them to be popular. *The Female Quixote, or, The Adventures of Arabella*, by Mrs. Charlotte Lennox, is much less spirited than Fielding's *Tom Thumb the Great*, and, like the works that it travesties, is over-long. It belongs, like various enterprises of Smollett and of Graves, to the imitative Quixote-literature which so easily turns dreary. Arabella, though we hear that she is lovely and majestic, is altogether too crazy and undignified for a ' female Quixote ' : a being, indeed, who can never be depicted until a female Cervantes has arisen. But her ' humour ' is very pleasantly kept up, and her arguments, and instances, and eel-like evasions are inexhaustible. Mrs. Lennox herself had the Scudérys and their fellow-romancers at her fingers'

ends, and has caught, for her Arabella, the mawkish long-winded manner of the best models. Arabella's most telling point, in answer to critics, is that the 'famous Scudéry' has added far more than the ancient authorities to our historical knowledge:

> I question, if any other historian but himself knew that Cleopatra was really married to Julius Caesar; or that Caesario, her son by this marriage, was not murdered, but married the fair Queen of Ethiopia, in whose dominions he took refuge.

Mrs. Barbauld, in the preface to her reprint of the story in the *British Novelists*, has said all that need be said about it, and it is always agreeable to fall back upon her cool, shrewd verdicts:

> The gardener she [Arabella] imagines to be a prince in disguise, and is extremely shocked when her supposed lover is turned away for stealing carp. . . . [She] calls a lady's waiting-maid into her closet, and gravely desires her to relate, according to immemorial custom, the *adventures* of her lady. The surprise of the waiting-maid is extreme, as her lady happens to have had some adventures of a nature she would not wish to be talked of. . . . The work is rather spun out too much, and not very well wound up. The grave moralizing of a clergyman is not the means by which the heroine should have been cured of her reveries. . . . [The book] has one disadvantage . . . namely that the satire has now no object.

The mockery of the knight-errant takes a wholly different turn in *The Spiritual Quixote, or, The Summer's Ramble of Mr. Geoffrey Wildgoose* (1772). The versatile author, Richard Graves[1] (1715-1804), well repays exploration. He was the friend of Blackstone, of whom he has left some anecdotes; and he moved in the circle of Lady Luxborough, Jago, Whistler, and Shenstone, which has been called the 'Warwickshire coterie.' His *Recollections* of Shenstone give the best picture of that poet. Graves was an essayist, of a graceful and pleasing kind, and a poet himself. His ballad of the *Farmer's Son*, on the George Barnwell theme, was of a fashionable kind. The youth goes to London, is ruined by a bad woman; his parents, coming to find him, hear the hawkers crying his 'dying speech' at Tyburn. The *Rout*, in octosyllabics, is a light thing in the spirit of Anstey. But Graves's best piece of verse, which he tells us was 'written in 1750,' is *Domestic Happiness*, and the opening may be quoted:

> Though chill descends the drizzling rain,
> And hollow blows the wind,
> Of wintry storms I 'll not complain,
> While thus my Lucy 's kind.

And it ends :

> The flaunting nymphs that haunt the town
> I void of envy see,
> While Lucy, in her linen gown,
> Is all the world to me.

Graves, who was long rector of Claverton, knew his Bath, and attended the vase-dippings of the poetical Lady Miller at Batheaston. He also knew the Midlands well, and his Geoffrey Wildgoose, the Quixote of his story, patrols them, though not in the spirit of Tom Jones, and also visits London. He is a gentleman-convert, a preaching Methodist ; and the cuts in the old editions show him haranguing stolid or annoyed villagers, brushing the pipe from the mouth of his Sancho, one Crabshaw, and generally playing the part of a pious *picaro*. There is no lack of genuine fun and humours, of the boisterous kind ; of stories within the story ; and a certain relish for scenery. The satire against the Wesleyans is often forced, but is not brutal like that of Foote or Johnstone ; and some concessions are made to their sincerity.

Another work of Graves, *Columella, or, The Distressed Anchoret* (1779), which he terms ' a colloquial tale,' is an agreeable medley of travel-notes, moralising, scenery, politics, and anecdote. ' Columella,' a Mr. Milward, a man of culture, has retired to his country seat in search of peace ; but is punished for quitting the ' sphere ' in which he was ' qualified to shine ' (so runs the moral) by becoming a ' prey to low spirits, spleen, and, I am afraid, an incurable melancholy.' He also degenerates ; his temper fails, he overeats himself, and he is forced to marry his illiterate housekeeper. The book is a kind of humorous counterblast to the already fashionable praises of rural life, and is full of gentle pleasant observation of the English roads and inns. Two of Columella's friends travel down to visit him, and hear the life-stories of their companions in the coach. They watch their host floundering in his false position ; he has only succeeded in one respect : he has, he tells us, ' done something for Nature.' That is, like Shenstone at the Leasowes, he has found her good and left her better, by improving the landscape into an Italian picture. It was now the age of William Gilpin, the apostle of the ' picturesque ' ; and a quotation will show the state of taste in the year 1779 :

> The foreground of this landscape was broken by some tufts of oaks, and other forest trees, on the verge of the lawn ; beyond which, on each side of the valley, several little hills, covered with hanging woods,

rose in beautiful perspective; the tops or sides of which Columella had ornamented with several striking objects.

On the brow of one hill appeared the Sibyl's temple, ruinated like that at Tivoli; a pediment, supported by Ionic columns, rose at the foot of another; the venerable Gothic tower of a parish church was discovered at a distance amongst the tufted trees; and the whole was terminated by some blue mountains in the horizon, and enlivened by a considerable stream, which ran winding down the valley; over which an old bridge of three arches made a picturesque appearance: and as the sun was now setting behind the western hills, it gave a glowing warmth to the landscape, which would have foiled the pencil of B——f——d [? Bampfylde], G——b——h [Gainsborough], or even of Claude Lorraine himself.

Another of Columella's successes is a cascade (depicted in the frontispiece to the second volume), which is put quite right by being 'broken in its fall by some projecting fragments or roots of trees that shot fantastically across it.' Still he is unhappy; he does marry the housekeeper, and has still to vegetate. Once the party go to Bath, of which a somewhat Hogarthian representation is given; and I may extract the more decorous part of a little-known thumbnail sketch, to accompany the familiar pictures by Anstey, Smollett, and Miss Burney. One of the small 'pavements or parades' in the city

was frequented every hour in the day by a variety of little gambling parties, some at chuck-farthing, some at marbles, some at pitch and hustle; whose disputable claims were a continual source of noise and altercation. . . . The boys would now often slip privately to his door, and give him the *randan* in such a manner as almost startled him into convulsions; and Columella was frequently seen out on the parade pursuing them with a whip or a cane, to the no small diversion of his neighbours.

By this time all the little ambulatory tradesmen had got their cue, and exerted themselves with redoubled force under Columella's window. The milk-woman's ear-piercing pipe tortured his nerves with reiterated notes; the chimney-sweeper's boys generally succeeded in the same key; the pickled-oyster man prolonged his hollow tone with an ominous solemnity.

XVII

In this miscellany of minor fiction a few general features may be traced. Almost everywhere it is shaped, or coloured, by the work of one or other of the four masters. Among the exceptions is *Peter Wilkins*, which takes its pattern from the former age, and might quite well have been written before 1740. Nor

was the device used in the peregrinations of the lapdog and the guinea invented by Smollett, who adopted it later than Coventry and Johnstone. In its form, or lack of form, *John Buncle* is an anomalous variety of the 'life and adventures.' Still, the attraction of Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, and Sterne is pervasive and obvious, and must be studied from more than one point of view. From that of structure, Richardson and Fielding, who are careful builders, contrast with Smollett and Sterne, who both employ, though in totally different ways, the looser plan. The studious plot is seen in *Sidney Bidulph*, the casual pilgrimage in the *Spiritual Quixote*. But this distinction must not be made too sharp; for it was Fielding himself, as we know, who fitted the wanderings and vicissitudes of Tom Jones into an orderly scheme. And if, neglecting construction, we turn to the spirit and the method, the names group themselves on quite another, and a deeper, principle. This may be roughly described as the familiar opposition between 'sense and sensibility.' Fielding and Smollett are encamped, not of course always consciously, but actually, and in respect of the influence they exerted, over against Richardson and Sterne. The last two differ so much from each other that this broad contrast may seem to be falsified; but it holds nevertheless. In one case it is the real, big world that we are watching, much as it is, with amusement and conviction, if not always with pleasure; in the other it is an arranged, excogitated world, with life in it indeed, but often the life that is seen under a microscope. From this scene, however wonderful, we return, in the course of nature, to the other. 'Sense' may be taken as the habit of mind which prefers and records actual life, rather than any emotional misreading of it. To express the 'sensible' method of portraiture, the terms realism, or literalism, are the best we have, and bad at the best. 'Realism' has come to suggest to most hearers want of selection, or want of humour, or indifference to beauty if not a liking for ugliness. But this will not do for work like Smollett's, and still less for Fielding's. For the personal descriptions in *Roderick Random* 'literalism' is a better word; but it is literalism heightened by a certain violence of eyesight. Fielding was content to describe his own aim as truth to human nature; but that phrase again is large, and would apply equally to Shakespeare on the one side, and to Sterne on the other. The term 'positive' is perhaps the least open to objection; but it is vague, and we have to try to define it in each instance. Perhaps, in relation to the novel, it is best explained by contrast with the method of 'sensibility' or

'sentiment,' of which much has already been said. The clash is well seen in the mockeries, or parodies, of sentiment which are found in *Tom Thumb*, in *Joseph Andrews*, and on a smaller scale in the *Female Quixote*. For 'sensibility,' in the end, was killed chiefly by ridicule, and also by the national instinct. The Englishman likes to feel something hard between his teeth; he can do without logic, or effusion, or analysis, but not without fact—fact sanely seen and humorously presented.

But here, too, there is every kind of shading and blending. The votaries of sentiment like to stiffen their story with a dose of literalism or crudity. This we have seen in Richardson; and even the tear-compeller, Mackenzie, is not above it, or the erratic Amory. An incidental personage in *John Buncle*, an Irish rake, who like Bunyan's Mr. Badman lives wickedly and dies happy, is drawn in ruthless style. On the other hand, in *Sidney Bidulph*, which aims at describing manners and humours on a broad scale, there is much passionate and high-strung writing. All these contrasts and combinations will be found again, though otherwise mixed, in the comedies that are the subject of the next chapter. Sentiment, in particular, is there superabundant, and takes a colouring that is not exactly found in the novel. Even in tragedy, above all in the domestic tragedy that is written in prose, it reappears with a change.

The later followings of Fielding, like Cumberland's *Henry* (1795), belong to the next age. The trail of Richardson is over works like Holcroft's *Anna St. Ives* (1792). But the main phenomenon, down to the appearance of *Waverley* in 1814, was to be the rise and predominance of the women novelists. Miss Burney's *Evelina*, in 1778, announced this change; and in spite of her superficial debts to Richardson, as in the use of the epistolary form, she stands at the beginning, not at the end, of a period. The Eastern tale of fantasy was to culminate in Beckford's *Vathek* (in French, 1787); and the fountain-head of the 'story of terror,' *le roman noir*, the *Castle of Otranto*, has been noted already (Ch. II.).

CHAPTER IX

COMEDY

I

The drama,[1] during this period, produced few classics—fewer than the novel; and these are all comedies, and are all either by Goldsmith or by Sheridan. The other comic playwrights are seldom subtle, or highly intellectual; there is no English Marivaux; but there is much to remind us of Smollett. We find little depth, true irony, or delicacy of style, and plenty of fun, entertainment, dexterous craftsmanship, and knowledge of humours. There is much that is worth reading; and plays, unless they are really good, are seldom easy to read. It is difficult to sort out and classify the material, owing to the multitude of mixed and intermediate forms; but there are two main species, or rather marked extremes, which provide a working principle of division. There is irresponsible comedy, a cheerful, noisy, motley show, a kind of Bartholomew Fair, which exists chiefly to amuse, and readily drops into personalities, caricature, and insolence. At the other pole there is comedy with a moral purpose more or less avowed; and this, again, has two varieties. One is the censorious kind, which aims at pillorying some vice, abuse, or social evil. The other is the 'sentimental' kind, which is more clearly marked, and will occupy the next chapter. Its purpose, broadly speaking, is to work on the more generous feelings of the audience, and to produce an atmosphere of indulgence, especially towards the more undeserving among the *dramatis personae*. But this habit of mind is found sporadically in many plays that are not strictly 'sentimental.'

Into the first and gayer class fall the crowd of operas, pantomimes, entertainments, and musical trifles which were let loose by the success of the *Beggar's Opera* in 1728. They belong to the history of the stage rather than to letters, and will only be mentioned in passing; but some of their songs rise into poetry. Their popularity did much to discourage genuine comic talent between 1730 and 1740. Some of these entertainers, like Isaac

Bickerstaffe, join with Garrick and Foote in merrily depicting the swarming life of London. Townley, Macklin and Hoadly, and better workmen like the elder Colman, produce many a brilliant picture, or travesty, of manners. The national varieties of the ancient comic types jabber in their several dialects. There are grabbing Scots, comic Irishmen, capering Frenchmen, and Britons travelling abroad. There are old sea-dogs using briny language; also climbing needy authors, scandalous pamphletmongers, cunning or foolish rustics, and canters and swindlers of every brand. Then, faring westwards (for London is usually the scene), we pass into Vanity Fair, where the company is better dressed. The small patricians and gentry come forward, the middle-class recedes; and the Lord Fellamars, rare in the world of *Tom Jones*, are plentiful as blackberries in the theatre. There are Belcours and Belmours, Belvilles and Delviles, Dorilants and Dorimants, who often have titles and who are nominally gentlemen. Beside them are Lady Bells and Lady Bettys in profusion. The classical figures also persist: the heavy parents, insisting on the *patria potestas* and driving the children to marry for money; and, on the side of the children, the confidential man and maid, often playing a double game and marrying off at the conclusion. Other characters remind us of the *Idler*: the 'virtuoso' who collects inane trifles, or the girl whose head is turned by novels. Others, again, have more dramatic possibilities: the bedizened old *beau* who is good at heart, or the scrupulous widow who has to be manœuvred by a gayer friend into a second marriage which she really desires. But this is to touch the fringe of the comedy of sentiment; and before proceeding, a note upon the chronology may be of service.

Arthur Murphy, in his *Gray's Inn Journal* (March 30, 1754), states that between the *Provoked Husband* (1728) (Cibber's completion of Vanbrugh's *Journey to London*), and Hoadly's *Suspicious Husband* (1747),

> there is a melancholy chasm of twenty years. In that whole time nothing has been produced that deserves the name of just and regular comedy. The *Beggar's Opera*, it is true, like a single star, appeared in the theatrical hemisphere during that interval. But the piece, excellent as it is, . . . cannot be classed with that legitimate species of comedy, which tends to the improvement of the manners.

Murphy's account is on the whole correct; the renewal of the comic craft was still fresh in mind when he wrote this passage. The years from 1730 to 1740 are chiefly redeemed by the skits

of Carey and by the talent, as yet undecided, of Fielding. But the true start may be dated from the entry of Garrick in 1741 upon the public stage. Foote, and Murphy himself, come into further view about ten years later; Macklin, Colman, and *High Life Below Stairs*, near the end of the sixth decade; Goldsmith and Kelly in the end of the seventh; Cumberland and Sheridan in the eighth. Thus the flowering of comedy nearly coincides with that of fiction; while the sentimental kind, in its more extreme shape, together with the marked revulsion against it, appears late in the day. Allowing for all exceptions and reversions, and remembering that the older kinds continue to flourish beside the new, we can track a certain movement from farce and entertainment towards true comedy, from a cruder towards a closer kind of construction, and from caricature portraiture towards dramatic point. But at the end of the period, after Sheridan has left the stage, comes a quick decline, of which there have been many warning symptoms; and in the years that follow the higher comedy has little enough to show.

II

A salute is first of all due to Colley Cibber [1] (1671-1757), who links two ages of the drama and whose *Apology* outlives his plays. Cibber wrote no drama worth speaking of after the time of George the First; his initiation of the 'comedy of sentiment' will be noted later (Ch. x.); but he went on acting, and remained the *doyen* of the theatre. He was the broad, impervious target of the satirists and jesters. He was an institution, and a piece of history, and above all a storehouse of memories for the most perishable of the arts. 'Pity,' he cries in his *Apology*,

> it is that the momentary beauties flowing from an harmonious elocution cannot, like those of poetry, be their own record! That the animated graces of the player can live no longer than the instant breath and motion that presents them, or at best can but faintly glimmer through the memory or imperfect attestation of a few surviving spectators. Could *how* Betterton spoke be as easily known as *what* he spoke, then might you see the Muse of Shakespeare in her triumph.

Such laments are always common, and in this period are often heard: they are keenest when some great performer has just gone. Thus, soon after the deaths of Mrs. Theophilus Cibber

and of Quin, Garrick wrote, in his often-quoted prologue to the *Clandestine Marriage* (1766):

> The painter dead, yet still he charms the eye;
> While England lives, his fame can never die;
> But he, who *struts his hour upon the stage*,
> Can scarce extend his fame for half an age;
> Nor pen nor pencil can the actor save;
> The art, and artist, share one common grave . . .
> Your children cannot feel what you have known;
> They 'll boast of Quins and Cibbers of their own.

So may we 'later Victorians' recall a gesture of Coquelin in *Gringoire*, or a tone of the elder Irving in *The Bells*. It is hard that the art which partakes of three others, namely sculpture, painting, and letters, should *therefore* be the most transient. In 1767, Lessing [1] was pointing out how acting lies midway between poetry and the plastic arts, uniting as it does the element of movement, or succession, which is involved in language, with the momentary and simultaneous effect of an appeal to the eye. Science, perhaps, may save some spectral image of the Quins and Cibbers of to-day, by sounds and shadows which are timed together.

As it is, we are left with pictures and descriptions; and Cibber's colours are still fresh. He was nearing seventy when he sat down to compose *An Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber, Written by Himself* (1740). He had played well in comedy, and ill in tragedy, for a whole generation. He had written or adapted some thirty pieces, had for many years helped to manage Drury Lane, and in 1730 had been, most absurdly, appointed Laureate. In the second version of the *Dunciad* (1742) he was afterwards, not less absurdly, appointed the King of Dulness. But in truth Cibber was only, or chiefly, absurd when he tried to make verses, and when he quarrelled. He provoked Fielding, who hit back rather too hard; and, as if not content with the enmity of two great writers, he angered many small ones. But Cibber is not to be put down for long, any more than a football in the water. He takes the line of *capping* his critics, and tells us of his own faults before they have had time to do so; sets them forth gaily, as if they were those of another man. Although a much worse writer, he has almost the skill of Boswell in self-exposure. Indeed, he confesses freely to his shaky English; but his dragging style does not make his record less vivid.

The historical value of the *Apology* is also great, despite all inaccuracies; but the mazy chronicle of the companies, of their

alliances and dispersions, of their rival vanities and money quarrels, is of minor interest. Cibber makes it as lively as may be ; but we prize much more his memories, and especially his remoter memories, of scenes and persons. These are often in the form of a ' character,' which is well fitted for his purpose. There had been many good character-writers, and many good actors, in the seventeenth century ; but there were few sketches of this kind by men of letters, until Steele set down his memories of Estcourt in the *Spectator*. So began the kind of tribute which Lamb and Hazlitt were to bring to perfection. Cibber, though he wrote later than Steele, was an older man, and remembered an older stage. Towards Garrick and the fresher style of acting he remained cool and somewhat surly. But he remembered Betterton in *Hamlet*, and describes him with true gusto, and with a word of warning to ' the profession ' :

> This was the light into which Betterton threw this scene ; which he opened with a pause of mute amazement ! then, rising slowly to a solemn trembling voice, he made the Ghost equally terrible to the spectator as to himself ! and, in the descriptive part of the natural emotions which the ghastly vision gave him, the boldness of his expostulation was still governed by decency ; manly, but not braving ; his voice never rising into that seeming outrage or wild defiance of what he naturally revered. But alas ! to preserve this medium between mouthing and meaning too little ; to keep the attention more pleasingly awake by a tempered spirit than by mere vehemence of voice ; is of all the master-strokes of an actor the most difficult to reach. In this none yet have equalled Betterton. . . .
>
> In the just delivery of poetical numbers, particularly where the sentiments are pathetic, it is scarce credible upon how minute an article of sound depends their greatest beauty or inaffection [*sic*]. The voice of a singer is not more strictly tied to time and tune, than that of an actor in theatrical elocution. The last syllable too long, or too slightly dwelt upon, in a period, depreciates it to nothing ; which very syllable, if rightly touched, shall, like the heightening stroke of light from a master's pencil, give life and spirit to the whole. I never heard a line in tragedy come from Betterton wherein my judgment, my ear, and my imagination were not fully satisfied.

Cibber's judgments are not merely those of the public or the playgoer, but of the dramatist and actor. He speaks from the wings, and remembers many painful rehearsals. The virtue of Vanbrugh's dialogue, from this point of view, could hardly be better stated :

> There is a clear and lively simplicity in his wit that neither wants the ornament of learning nor has the least smell of the lamp|in it. . . . There is something so catching to the ear, so easy to the memory,

in all he writ, that it has been observed by all the actors of my time, that the style of no author whatsoever gave their memory less trouble than that of Sir John Vanbrugh ; which I myself, who have been charged with several of his strongest characters, can confirm by a pleasing experience.

It must be always remembered that when this was written, and for long afterwards, the older comedy of Vanbrugh, like that of Congreve and Farquhar, was continually being acted and was perfectly familiar to playgoers.

Cibber also, like the theatrical critics of the *Spectator*, calls to mind many past fashions. He notes the change in the style of wigs, and the use and disuse of masks by ladies visiting the play. He also gives a glimpse of the ' laughing lady,' Nell Gwyn, entertaining King Charles and his brother in her ' private lodgings,' with a ' concert of music.' On hearing that the royalties had not enough money with them to reward the singer, Nell,

turning to the people about her, and making free with the King's common expression, cried, ' Od's fish ! what a company am I got into ! '

A story that may preface the comedies, presently to be noticed, of pure amusement. But in Cibber's own career there was an episode, not related by himself, that was not so much amusing as bitter and grotesque. In 1755, two years before his death, his youngest daughter Charlotte, Mrs. Charke, published a *Narrative* of her life, partly truth and partly fable, with a fantastic dedication ' to herself.' She was an actress of some gifts, and had played the original part of Lucy in *George Barnwell*. But this was only one of her pursuits. She had made a hapless love-match with Charke the violinist, a faithless scallawag, whom she had to drop after ' tracing her spouse from morn to eve through the Hundreds of Drury.' Her father had cast her off, and seems to have been deaf to her cries of repentance (printed in capitals and italics). She states that she kept a puppet show, waited in an eating-house, starved along with her young daughter, and was put to a thousand shifts. Her ramshackle, hysterical *Narrative*, if half of it be true, throws an evil light on the London underworld in the middle the century.

III

The correspondence of David Garrick [1] (1717-1779) is like one of those plays that represent the quarrels and disappointments of the greenroom. The malign Murphy, the acrid Mrs. Abington,

the chagrined Colman, and Garrick himself with all his foibles of 'finessing,' complaisance, and timidity, are self-portrayed. We are struck with his fundamental good nature [1] and good feeling, to which there are many witnesses. His friends and acquaintances include Gainsborough and Sir Joshua, Robertson and Dr. Arne, Lady Spencer and Hannah More, William Whitehead and Thomas Warton, Sheridan and Cumberland, Diderot and Grimm. There is a charming note from Mrs. Clive,[2] marked 'My Pivy, excellent'; and a resounding compliment from Gibbon:

> Foreign nations are a kind of posterity, and among them you already reap the full harvest of your fame [1777].

There are familiar notes from Burke, and shrewd ones from Mme Riccoboni, a careful observer of the drama. One passage, written by Garrick in reference to the acting of Mme Clairon, gives his view on the question that is most disputed in his own craft, and shows his artistic sense as well as his good English:

> She has everything that art and a good understanding, with great natural spirit, can give her. But then I fear (and I only tell you my fears, and open my soul to you) the heart has none of those instantaneous feelings, that life-blood, that keen sensibility, that bursts at once from genius, and like electrical fire, shoots through the veins, marrow, bones, and all, of every spectator. Madame Clairon is so conscious and certain of what she can do, that she never, I believe, had the feelings of the instant come upon her unexpectedly: but I pronounce that the greatest strokes of genius have been unknown to the actor himself, till circumstances, and the warmth of the scene, has sprung the mine as it were, as much to his own surprise, as that of the audience. Thus I make a great difference between a great genius and a good actor. The first will always realise the feelings of his character, and be transported beyond himself; while the other, with great powers, and good sense, will give great pleasure to an audience, but never
>
> pectus inaniter angit,
> Irritat, mulcet, falsis terroribus implet,
> Ut magus.

IV

Goldsmith's praise of Garrick in *Retaliation*, 'as a wit, if not first, in the very first line,' may be on the generous side; but the interpreter of Shakespeare and the friend of Burke and Johnson was very close to literature. He poured out many prologues, epilogues, epigrams, and comedies inclining to farce. They all bear the stamp of the impromptu; the same

mobility that wore out a hundred faces on the stage appears in Garrick's writings and letters. His feeling for poetry was genuine, but his treatment of Shakespeare [1] shows that it was easily *occulted*. It is little that he 'cut' the sacred text, rescuing 'that noble play,' *Hamlet*, 'from all the rubbish of the fifth act'; but his doctorings and perversions of the poet are too well known. A line from *Much Ado* is thrust into the midst of a mangled *Cymbeline*, and a scrap from *L'Allegro* into an operatic rendering of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. There is a new and original dialogue between Romeo and Juliet in the tomb of the Capulets. The traditional *Lear*, Tate's *Lear*, was to hold the stage until the next century; and in retaining it (with changes) Garrick was simply not ahead of his time. For antidote we turn to a witness like O'Keeffe:

> His saying, in the bitterness of his anger, 'I will do such things,—what they are, I know not,' and his sudden recollection of his own want of power, were so pitiable as to touch the heart of every spectator. The simplicity of his saying, 'Be these tears wet?—yes, faith,' putting his finger to the cheek of Cordelia, and then looking at his finger, was exquisite.

Garrick borrowed more freely than frankly, constantly adapting from the French, and his share in the plays that pass for his is often uncertain. His gifts are perhaps most evident in the parts that he invented or adjusted for himself. His Fribble, in *Miss in Her Teens* (1747), a fellow who cringes before a louder coward, and his Sharp, in the *Lying Valet* (1741), are good examples. Sharp, the knave who helps his needy young master to an heiress and diverts a gay company from descending on the empty larder, animates the whole farce. Garrick excelled in presenting humorists; his aspect as Abel Drugger in the *Alchemist* is preserved in a well-known picture by Zoffany. In *The Guardian* (1759), adapted from Fagan's *La Pupille*, he imagined and played a more sympathetic figure. One scene in this generous little comedy is of an unexpected delicacy: and we could wish to have watched, on the features of the middle-aged Mr. Heartly, the dawning sense that *he* (not the odious Young Clackit) has won the heart of his ward Harriot. She is driven to enlighten him herself, through a letter supposed to be dictated to the youth; but as it proceeds, Heartly sees daylight. In *The Irish Widow* (1772) there is plenty of wild wit and pleasing absurdity. Mrs. Barry had to enact the widow, first in her own person, then as a loud extravagant dame, and lastly in the disguise of an imaginary fire-eating brother. These

are some of the best of Garrick's productions ; others are stage journalism. In *Bon Ton* (1775) the theme is the common one of the travelled citizen family who come back demoralised from foreign parts and are put to shame by an honest old English gentleman. Garrick's first piece, *Lethe*, his *Cymon* (if his it be), and his *Farmer's Return from London* subsist, if at all, by their easy verses ; and Garrick as a rhymer is by no means to be slighted.

V

His songs and snatches, often to be found in his musical farces, show much tunefulness and metrical versatility. *Sylvia*, said to have been made for his friend and companion Margaret Woffington,[1] opens in gallant strain :

If truth can fix thy wavering heart,
  Let Damon urge his claim ;
He feels the passion void of art,
  The pure, the constant flame.

Though sighing swains their torments tell,
  Their sensual love contemn :
They only praise the beauteous shell,
  But slight the inward gem.

There is an honesty of passion here, which breaks through the fashionable diction and forces its way into the rhythm ; and the same is true of another song, which concludes :

Youth and beauty kindle love,
  Sighs and vows will fan the fire ;
Sighs and vows may traitors prove,
  Sorrow then succeeds desire ;
Honour, faith, and well-earned fame,
Feed the sacred, lasting flame !

Most of Garrick's ditties are cheery, casual, ephemeral things, but they often have a real beauty, or at least a pleasant prettiness :

Clouded or bright, the moon and sun
Are constant to the course they run ;
So, gay or sad, my heart, as true,
Rises and sets to love and you.
Look in the heavens ! each star you see
True to its orb, as I to thee.

Or again :

Care flies from the lad that is merry,
  Whose heart is as sound,
  And cheeks are as round,
As round and as red as a cherry.

It is not every one who can make these nothings. Once or twice, with a little goodwill, we can find in Garrick a remote likeness to the *Songs of Innocence* :

> I laugh and I sing,
> I am blithesome and free.

And when the linnet is released—

> Then so merry was he,
> And because he was free,
> He came to his cage back again.

Warwickshire, and *Shakespeare's Mulberry-Tree*, and Mrs. Clive's song in *Lethe*, with its refrain ' to the Midnight Harkaway,' are in another key, that of jollity and festivity.

Garrick was a neat rhymer of compliments, and addressed pointed lines to Chatham, to Chesterfield, to Johnson, and to Gray ; and there is the epitaph inscribed on Hogarth's tomb. His prologues and epilogues best reveal his temper. In these, said Warburton, ' you have an original felicity.' Many are playful jingles of a ' topical ' kind, and are a precious record of the changes in theatrical taste. They tell of the comedy that is full ' of sentimental laudanum to make you sleep ' ; or of the ' spouting-clubs ' where the young Tappertits of the day meet and rehearse :

> There Hamlet's ghost stalks forth with double fist,
> Cries out with hollow voice, ' List, list, O list ! '
> And frightens Denmark's prince—a young tobacconist.

Albumazar, the old Jacobean comedy of Tomkis, was revived ' with alterations ' at Drury Lane, and Garrick writes :

> Since your old taste for laughing is come back,
> And you have dropped the melancholy pack
> Of tragi-comic-sentimental matter,
> Resolving to laugh more, and be the fatter,
> We bring a piece drawn from our ancient store,
> Which made old English sides with laughing sore.
> Some smiles from Tony Lumpkin if you spare,
> Let Trincalo of Totnam have his share.

The best of these compositions are dignified and serious, and sometimes have the note of sincere pathos which is heard in our heroic couplet from Dryden to Tickell, and from Churchill to Macaulay. Such is the farewell written for Mrs. Pritchard, playing Lady Macbeth for the last time :

> The curtain dropt,—my mimic life is past ;
> That scene of sleep and terror was my last . . .

To all my brethren whom I leave behind,
Still may your bounty, as to me, be kind;
To me for many years your favours flowed,
Humbly received—on small desert bestowed;
For which I feel—what cannot be expressed—
Words are too weak—my tears must speak the rest.

Probably nothing pleased Garrick better than the homage of Fielding's Partridge to his Hamlet:

He the best player! Why, I could act as well as he myself. I am sure if I had seen a ghost, I should have looked in the very same manner, and done just as he did.

Tom Jones, had he been a scholar, would have murmured *falsis terroribus implet.*

VI

The comedy *High Life Below Stairs* is printed as Garrick's in the 1798 edition of his *Dramatic Works*; but what share, if any, he had in it is uncertain, and the Rev. James Townley[1] is now credited with the authorship. It is a pity that this first-rate little farce cannot be added to Garrick's list. It trips swiftly along, and must have sincerely delighted both Dickens and Thackeray. It was played in 1759 at Drury Lane, though Garrick did not perform; and there was an amusing riot in the house, raised by the angry representatives of 'below stairs' who were present in the 'footman's gallery.' Lovel, the young master, feigns absence from home, puts on a rustic disguise, and takes a menial position among his own servants. They use the titles and ape the airs of their employers; and so do their guests, including a 'Duke's servant,' who takes the lead by natural selection amongst the mock Lady Babs and Lady Charlottes. Finally Lovel reappears in his own character, feigning drunk, and sends the whole party flying. *High Life Below Stairs* long kept the stage, and has not lost its savour.

Another and not less pleasant turn had already been given to this subject in a farcical piece by William Popple, entitled the *Double Deceit, or, The Cure for Jealousy* (1735). The second title refers to a less interesting underplot, in which a girl disguised as a man plays on the feelings of her lover. The 'double deceit,' however, is a neat piece of masquerading. An arbitrary but good-humoured old gentleman wishes to marry off his son and nephew to two unknown heiresses; and, to gain time, they persuade him to allow them to exchange identities with their two man-servants. These are to woo the ladies, and

to see what happens. But the old man tells the ladies the secret, and they resolve to do the like ; they change places with their maids, who are *not* in the secret. The gentlemen, therefore, are the persons really tested ; they are ' matched at their own weapons, maid for man.' And it is agreed that if the gentlemen fall in love with the disguised maids, for their supposed wealth, then ' let them marry 'em, for mere spite.' But the mistresses add :

Harriet. But if they should fall in love with us, in our servile attire, what then ?

Fanny. Why, then, girl, I would travel all the world over with them.

It is thus, of course, that events work out ; though the effect is marred by the gentlemen at first making the wrong sort of overtures. It is only the actual handmaids who are discomfited, thinking that the footmen are the gentlemen. This ancient topic, which is classically treated, though with quite another issue, in the *Précieuses ridicules*, demands no less than four actors, each of whom can make a double part persuasive in the same play. The elder George Colman, in his *Tit for Tat* (1786), plays very similar variations on the theme.

The dramas of Fielding have already been noticed (Ch. VII.), with their ingredients of topical satire, parody, farce, and true comedy. They fall, as a whole, into the class of plays whose aim is first and foremost to amuse, without any streaks of ' sentiment,' or any definite pulpiteering. Their satire, as in the *Miser*, is on the whole ' disinterested ' ; and they help, as observed before, to save the face of comedy in the comparatively dead season between the *Beggar's Opera* and the advent of Garrick.

VII

Samuel Foote [1] (1720-1777), that consummate mimic and professional droll, was also a most fertile and resourceful playwright. ' For loud obstreperous broadfaced mirth,' said Johnson (according to Foote), ' I know not his equal.' The stain of malice and vulgarity lies upon too much of his writing. But his scent for theatrical effect is of the keenest ; he is a master of caricature which is often rough and cruel, but often deserved ; sometimes he can invent a true and vivid character ; and his plays, of which there are more than twenty, are a repertory for the student of types, of customs, and of abuses. They tend to farce ; and though the farce can rise into comedy,

there is too little of the generous feeling which is required to keep comedy sweet. Much of Foote's drama depends on personal mimicry; and with this industry he began, in *The Diversions of the Morning* (1747). He also aped Quin, Garrick, and other actors with much applause in a 'monologue drama'; but his first real play was *Taste* (1752). Foote, like Johnson, had a sharp eye for the humours of struggling authors and artists. Mr. Carmine in *Taste* is the copyist who lives by selling, through the agency of a gang, genuine Old Masters, and who has an excellent conceit of himself:

> For, Sir, age, age, Sir, is all my pictures want to render 'em as good pieces as the masters from whom they are taken; and let me tell you, Sir, he that took my Susannah for a Guido, gave no mighty proofs of his ignorance, Mr. Puff.

The variety of characters which Foote both invented and played is remarkable. He was Buck in his farce *The Englishman in Paris* (1753) and in *The Englishman Returned from Paris* (1756), two brilliant pictures of the France-hating and the Frenchified Briton. He was the miserly Mr. Flint in *The Maid of Bath* [1] (1771), a play of a blatantly 'topical' kind, which introduces the mother and suitor of Elizabeth Linley, and even (although not to her disadvantage) Miss Linley herself. In an animated scene, Flint's cronies conspire to scare him out of an unnatural marriage with a young girl, by describing the mortality of elderly husbands and the extravagance of young wives. The landlords, rakes, physicians, and 'rantipoles' of the historic city skip cheerfully across the boards. Elsewhere, we find Foote trading without scruple on the prejudice of the gallery. In his best-known play, *The Minor* (1760), he does this in a truly disgusting fashion. There is an old procuress, Mrs. Cole, who in the same breath follows her calling and cants in what is supposed to be the language of Methodism. Otherwise *The Minor* is a good and breathless comedy, which may have been arranged so as to show the versatility of Bannister. For he played no less than three parts: he was Mrs. Cole; he was Shift, who would now be called a 'quick-change artist,' and who in passing mimicked a fellow-mimic, Tate Wilkinson; [2] while Shift, again, personates an auctioneer, and speaks his 'patter' with great vivacity. *The Minor* was recast before it succeeded, and its wild plot involves many swift and absurd disguises. The minor, Sir George Wealthy, is sowing many wild oats, but is a decent fellow. His father Sir William plots to save the wasted money by surrounding Sir George with sham

swindlers in his own employ. The real rascals, who are thus baffled, are Hogarthian in feature ; and Foote was at home in the world of sharks, ' cozeners,' and shady matrimonial brokers. The election humours of *The Mayor of Garratt* (1763) have lost their savour ; but it is redeemed by the figure of the peace-time soldier, the militia major who manœuvres at Hounslow, and whose troop is routed by a ' drove of fat oxen,' as he leads it to ' attack the gibbet ' and to gain possession of an important pigstye.

A few more of the figures that stand in Foote's pillory may be mentioned. In *The Nabob* (1772) he played the title-character, so often the target of eighteenth-century satire. Unlike the benevolent Touchwood in *St. Ronan's Well*, the nabob, Sir Matthew Mite, is here a villain to be outwitted ; and he is also a *virtuoso*, presiding over an ' antiquarian society.' This body includes amongst its exhibits ' a corkscrew presented by Sir John Falstaff to Harry the Fifth,' and also ' a Roman urn dug from the Temple of Concord,'—which is in fact something very different. Another pretender to culture appears in *The Patron* (1764), in the person of the amateur playwright and rhymester Sir Thomas Lofty, who presides over a party of toadies, and who opens the scene with the query, ' Nothing new to-day from Parnassus ? ' The story is suggested by one of Marmontel's. Lofty has turned *Robinson Crusoe* into a wretched drama, and has persuaded young Bever (who loves Lofty's niece) to take the risk of being publicly supposed the author. The play is duly damned ; and, to save the wounded self-opinion of Sir Thomas, Bever consents *still* to put up with the humiliation—but on condition that he may marry the lady. It is she, indeed, who sees how to turn the affair to advantage.

The Liar (1762) is one of the most riotous of Foote's plays, and leaves a better taste in the mouth than most of them. In the spirit of the title, he asserts that he took the plot from a Spanish original, but in fact he freely uses *The Lying Lover*, Steele's not very brilliant adaptation of *Le Menteur*. Foote's Young Wilding may not have the grand air of Corneille's Dorante, but he is a better performer on his instrument than Steele's Young Bookwit. He is always found out, always resilient, and always gay. The happiest stroke is Foote's own. Dorante, when hard pressed, invented a wife in Poitiers ; Bookwit, a wife at Oxford. The creature of Young Wilding's brain is a wife down at Abingdon. But, behold, she appears in the flesh to greet him ; and, though only for a moment, he is confused. She is a girl who has been tutored for the part by a humorous lady.

Foote wrote many other pieces, most of which contain some curious satire : *The Lame Lover*, with its snobbish knight, who deserts a lord for an earl, and an earl for a duke ; *The Author* (1757), with its note on the decay of patronage (' Patron ! the word has lost its use ') ; *The Bankrupt* (1773), with its wicked stepmother, who defames her stepdaughter in print in order to detach the girl's lover for her own child ; and *The Devil upon Two Sticks*, one of the plays in which Foote, who had lost a leg, pluckily made use of his infirmity upon the stage. Of more interest is *A Trip to Calais*, which can also be read in its altered form as *The Capuchin*. The bullying, foul-tongued Lady Kitty Crocodile was identified with that meteoric lady, the Duchess of Kingston ; and the piece was prohibited. In *The Capuchin* (1776) the attack is transferred to another personage (taken from life), a Mr. Viper, whose pen drips poison. The play, in either shape, brims over with life and malice. In one admirable passage (perhaps suggested by a scene in Marivaux' *Vie de Marianne*, pt. iii.), a bland lady abbess, who is trying to convert an English girl who has fled to her for refuge, cools off wonderfully on learning that her visitor is not an heiress after all. Foote leaves the impression of having degraded his very considerable faculty. He does assail abuses ; but he finds it hard to get away from personalities, and squabbles, and the temptation to ' take off ' his enemies and his friends. But he is an amusing, ingenious, and nimble-witted dog. In the *Memoirs* compiled by his friend William Cooke and published in 1805, all manner of quips and retorts, now and then good but mostly contemptible, are fathered upon Foote, the licensed jester and insulter.

VIII

It is unfortunate that Charles Macklin,[1] the player, wrote so little ; his two farces show the virile and sarcastic energy of his mind. He was famous for his Shylock and other parts, and introduced a more natural elocution, in place of the droning chant which is thought to have been miscopied from the Parisian theatre. *Love à la Mode* (1759) shows his power of caricature. Macklin may have remembered the presentment of the four nationalities in *Henry the Fifth*. A Briton, a Jew, an Irishman, and a Scot compete for the hand of his heroine. The equine Mr. Groom might be a base relation of Squire Western, and his language about the lady is that of the stud farm. To test the suitors, it is pretended that she has lost her fortune ; and Mr. Groom declares that now he ' would not back her for a shilling.'

Our forefathers had a robust sense of humour, which was also tickled by the snubs and flouts administered to the elastic Mr. Mordecai. Macklin played the leading part of Sir Archy MacSarcasm, who has a 'flyting match' with the Irish Sir Callaghan O'Brallaghan. They begin by bandying pedigrees, and proceed to quarrel as to which of their nationalities is the older :

Sir Archy. Why, yee of Ireland, sir, are but a colony frai us,—an ootcast ! a mere ootcast, and as such yee remain tull this hoor.

Sir Callaghan. I beg your pardon, Sir Archy, that is the Scotch account, which, you know, never speaks truth, because it is always partial : but the Irish history, which must be the best, because it was written by an Irish poet of my own family, one Shemus Thurlough Shannaghan O'Brallaghan—and he says, in his chapter of genealogy, that the Scots are all Irishmen's bastards.

Sir Archy. Hoo, sir ! baistards ! do yee call us illegeetemate, illegeetemate, sir !

Sir Callaghan. Faith, I do—for the youngest branch of our family, one MacFergus O'Brallaghan, was the very man that went from Carrickfergus, and peopled all Scotland with his own hands. . . .

The Irishman, who scorns money, wins the lady ; but the Scot talks on still, and keeps the stage.

Sir Pertinax MacSycophant, in *The Man of the World*, is a more finished picture of the climbing, grasping Northerner. He is imagined by Macklin in the spirit of Churchill ; but the invectives of the poet leave a fainter impression than the brazen monologues of Sir Pertinax. This comedy, in 1766, was termed *The True-Born Scotchman*, and was acted in Dublin. In England it was for many years prohibited ; in its later form, in 1781, it was played as *The Man of the World*. Two scenes stand out from the rest. In one, Sir Pertinax, who tries to marry his son off for his own political advancement, instructs him in the ways of getting on, and especially in that of *boowing* (that is, bowing) to persons of importance. This tirade was doubtless one of Macklin's great effects :

Sir, I boowed, and watched, and attended, and dangled upon the then great mon, till I got intill the very bowels of his confidence—hah ! got my snack of the clothing, the foraging, the contracts, the lottery tickets, and aw the poleetical bonuses ; till at length, Sir, I became a much wealthier man than one-half of the golden calves, I had been so long a-boowing to. And was na that boowing to some purpose, Sir, ha !

In the other scene, which shows a keener comic power, the Scots are more pleasing and sympathetic. The son talks with

the Lady Rodolpha Lumbercourt, for whom his father has designed him. In an excellent, embarrassed dialogue they discover that each of them is in love with another person ; the lady, indeed, with the young man's brother. So they combine forces, and part the best of friends, the strong-headed lady observing, ' So ye see, cousin Chairles, thoff I couldna mingle affections wi ye, I ha na ganged oot of the family.'

Benjamin Hoadly's comedy, *The Suspicious Husband* (1747), is a rapid, impudent, good-tempered little piece which had a long run and a great vogue in its time and which still remains mirthful enough. Its fortune was deservedly made by the character of Ranger, created for the stage by Garrick. Ranger is the madcap man about town, whose philosophy is to run after every well-looking woman he meets :

> This same goddess, Diana, shines so bright with her chastity, that, egad, I believe the wenches are ashamed to look her in the face. Now I am in an admirable mood for a frolic ; have wine in my head, and money in my pocket, and so am furnished out for the cannonading of any countess in Christendom. Ha ! what have we here ? a ladder !—this cannot be placed here for nothing—and a window open ! . . .

Ranger goes in, thereby spoiling the plot of his friend Bellamy for an honest elopement with his betrothed Jacintha. A comedy of errors in the dark follows, and no harm is done. Ranger has his own code and plays the game ; he will not blab, or play false to his friend. Mme Riccoboni's description of him, in a letter to Garrick, as ' un caractère absolument épisodique,' is less than just ; for it is Ranger, in the end, who brings together all the parties for a happy explanation. One of them is the ' suspicious husband,' Mr. Strictland, a poor specimen of his tribe, the owner of the house, and the guardian of Jacintha. Mrs. Strictland, too, is innocently embroiled in the confusions of the night. There is also a pleasant airy Clarinda, who keeps dangling a gallant of her own. It is pedantic to classify so gay a trifle ; but in fact, coming when it does, it marks a certain escape of the comic muse from the snares both of sentiment and of cynicism. The dialogue is rather free for the caprices of modern taste ; but the open and natural humour of Goldsmith is at least in sight. Hoadly was a physician, and the son of the elder Benjamin Hoadly, the noted divine, who was alive when *The Suspicious Husband* appeared. He may or may not have approved of it ; the tone of the work is not episcopal ; but it probably outlives his own elaborate tomes.

IX

George Colman [1] the Elder (1732-1794) has long ceased to occupy the stage ; but his plays are excellent to read. He has the mind of a gentleman, and he is something of a scholar. He found time in the midst of managing and composing to translate[2] Terence and the *Ars Poetica*. Hence, perhaps, his quick, educated style, so far above the happy-go-lucky English of Foote and the prose-and-verse medley of Lillo. Colman knew both the City and the Town, and liked to make play with their contacts and misunderstandings. In *The Man of Business* (1774) a young buck, the son of a citizen, and not without sound qualities, is saved from ruin by an adroit faithful old clerk. In *The Clandestine Marriage* (1766) a hard financier, willing to sell his daughter in marriage to some man of quality, is outwitted. The blunt, elderly Mr. Freeport, who saves a family by his generosity, appears in *The English Merchant* (1767), a work very liberally adapted from *L'Écossaise* of Voltaire ; and in the same play the dregs of Fleet Street are exposed, in the person of the slanderous pressman, Mr. Spatter. *The Oxonian in Town* (1767) shows the collegian in a new light, not as a dupe or a pedant, but as the hunter-down of sharks and swindlers.

Colman had started with farce, and his first venture, *Polly Honeycombe* (1760), illuminates the fashions and tastes of the hour in the matter of fiction. Polly, like Lydia Languish afterwards, is novel-smitten, and has fed her mind on Richardson and Fielding, and also on the chronicles of

> Betsey Thompson, and Sally Wilkins, and Clarinda and Leonora in the *History of Jack Careless*, and Julia in the *Adventures of Tom Ramble*, and fifty others. Did not they all elope ? and so will I too. I have as much right to elope as they had, for I have as much love, and as much spirit, as the best of them.

She wishes to elope with a Mr. Scribble, whom she takes to be a gentleman but who is in fact an attorney's clerk. To Mr. Ledger, her formal suitor, she observes :

> I hate you ; you are as deceitful as Blifil, as rude as the Harlowes, and as ugly as Dr. Slop.

And the commercial Mr. Ledger not unnaturally reflects :

> She 'd make a terrible wife for a sober citizen. Who can answer for her behaviour ? *I would not underwrite her for ninety per cent.*

Colman, when reprinting this ' dramatic novel ' in the collected edition of his plays (1777), prefixed to it an ' extract from the

catalogue of one of our most popular circulating libraries.' Many of the entries are genuine ; and there are no less than one hundred and eighty-two of them, mostly entitled the ' Adventures,' the ' history,' or the ' memoirs ' of some heroine or hero. The list is a sound index to the taste of the time, and mentions many stories now unredeemable. As to Colman's man-handlings of *King Lear*, *Philaster*, and *The Silent Woman*, they need only be named. But two of his own plays are of special note. His first constructed comedy—for *Polly Honeycombe* is but a skit—*The Jealous Wife* (1761), confesses its debt to *Tom Jones*. The boisterous Mr. Russet is a creditable stage version of Western. Also the suspicions of the jealous Mrs. Oakly are ingeniously prolonged, and raised to the torture-point, and she plays termagant long before she capitulates and (somewhat too rapidly) reforms herself. Oakly, after many vain attempts to find courage, has at last put down his foot. The play is dedicated to the Earl of Bath, William Pulteney, with many praises of his wit, so much applauded in his day and now somewhat difficult to verify.

The Clandestine Marriage was written in partnership with Garrick ; and each author, says Colman, ' considers himself as responsible for the whole.' Garrick composed, at any rate, one of his best prologues, in which he does honour to the shade of Hogarth. *Marriage à la Mode* had, in one sense, suggested the play. That is, the marriage of the two good young Lovewells is a love-match, and *not* ' à la Mode ' at all. All the embarrassments arise from their having hidden the marriage : a precarious theme, since at any moment in the action they might perfectly well speak out and face the consequences. But then there would have been no play. That would have been regrettable, for it is one of the most rapid and good-humoured comedies of the time, with at least five well-drawn characters. Old Sterling, the lady's father, answers to his name ; the word *cash* is written on his heart ; and the concealment of the marriage is due to the young couple's terror of Sterling. He is a Jonsonian figure, the creature of a humour ; but he is alive, and there is the *cri du cœur* in his exclamation,

> Here does this whirligig man of fashion offer to give up thirty thousand pounds in hard money, with as much indifference as if it was a China orange !

The man of fashion is Sir John Melvil, who has arranged a match of convenience with the repellent elder sister, Miss Sterling, but has meanwhile become enamoured of Fanny, the

younger—being unaware that she is already Mrs. Lovewell. She has been married four months, and her situation is becoming impossible. In a masterly scene Melvil bargains with old Sterling for the right to transfer his suit; and the thirty thousand pounds above mentioned are the sum that he is ready to sacrifice as 'consideration.' He has already pleaded his case with Fanny, and persuaded himself, much to her indignation, that his treachery towards her sister is a mere trifle. A more genial figure is Melvil's uncle, Lord Ogleby. At first sight he is merely a broken-down old amorist who has lived hard in his youth and who

> must have a great deal of brushing, oiling, screwing, and winding-up, to set him a-going for the day.

Fanny, in desperation, appeals to Lord Ogleby to save her from Melvil's addresses; but her modest language, concerning another who has won her heart, is ambiguous, and is appropriated by the old lord to himself. He is enraptured, takes much 'cephalic snuff,' and comes to terms with Sterling; but when the secret marriage is revealed, and the furious parent is about to dismiss the couple for ever, then Lord Ogleby, though undeceived and chagrined, acts in what would now be called a sporting fashion, and saves everything by his interposition:

> Poor girl! I swore to support her affection with my life and fortune; —'tis a debt of honour, and must be paid. You swore as much too, Mr. Sterling: but your laws in the city will excuse *you*, I suppose; for you never strike a balance without 'errors excepted.'

Colman's plays are in the main line of tradition, being humorous in purpose, regularly built, and not of the 'sentimental' kind; but such a scene shows how the appeal of that species to good feeling and generosity was making way with the public.

One dashing and light-hearted comedy of intrigue, *Gil Blas* (1751), does credit to Edward Moore, the author of *The Gamester*. He owes, indeed, to *Gil Blas* (bk. iv.) the central theme; the lady who pursues her cavalier, masquerading as her own brother (in the original, her cousin), changes quickly into her own dress in order to be courted, gets quit of a rival by a trick, wins the gentleman, and uses Gil Blas, her servant, to lie her safely through all difficulties. Moore also borrows the preliminary blunder of Gil Blas, who fancies that his mistress is smitten with himself. But he alters the story in many adroit ways, makes it at least as lively as Lesage, and invents incident as audaciously

as Gil Blas. We must therefore try to forgive him for his contemptible comedy called *The Foundling* (1748); where a repentant Young Belmont, who has tried to wrong a lady, is forgiven and accepted, and is bidden by her father to 'take her, and *protect the virtue you have tried.*' It would be hard indeed upon 'the moral sense of our ancestors' if we were to judge them by this. If anything could save such a work, it is the figure, not of the nauseous fop, Faddle, but of the airy elusive Rosetta, who plays slightly with a solemn gentleman.

X

Much might be said against that copious, ill-tempered author-of-all-work, Arthur Murphy (1727-1805), the 'Mur' of Johnson's familiar acquaintance, and the untrustworthy biographer of Fielding and Garrick. Yet, like Colman, he had scholarship; he turned Pope's *Temple of Fame* and Gray's *Elegy* into Latin verse, and was a lover of Virgil and Horace. He had some critical sense; and in the *Gray's Inn Journal* (1752-54), mostly written by himself, there is a passage which shows a glimmering of Lessing's argument in the *Laokoon* (1766) on the frontiers between poetry and painting. In poetry, says Murphy,

> the emotions, however quick, are still successive, and therefore elude the power of that art, which is confined to a single point of time.

Swift, again, is aptly praised, much as the printer's reader was to praise Macaulay, because 'no man of common apprehension need ever read a sentence twice over.' It is also to the purpose to say that the game of cards in the *Rape of the Lock* is not rightly to be called 'burlesque,' seeing that 'inanimate objects cannot be made ridiculous.' These flashes light up the wastes of the *Gray's Inn Journal*, which is filled with the usual 'characters' and fables, and the usual clubs and fashions and gossip and scandal. Murphy also made a *Poetical Epistle to Dr. Johnson*, containing the vain appeal,

> And since I cannot learn thy classic lore,
> Instruct me, Johnson, how to write no more.

It would be idle to exhume any more of Murphy's ventures, always excepting his plays, which fill four out of the seven volumes of his works.

Many of his comedies are light, animated two-act pieces, easy to read and to forget. They are often amusing; but they

are marked by a certain callousness which ceases to surprise when we read the author's letters to Garrick. In *The Citizen*, a son, who is visiting his Corinna, a lady of no fame, finds his old father lurking under the table. *The Old Maid* is a heartless, ingenious little farce. A young man is enamoured of a lady named Harlow; but she, young and fair, whom he thinks to be Miss Harlow, is in fact her sister-in-law *Mrs.* Harlow. The real Miss Harlow, the 'old maid,' who is hard-favoured, he mistakes for the wife, and to her he confesses his love for Miss. She takes his addresses to herself; and, when all is cleared up, is left to be mocked at and disappointed. More may be said of one of Murphy's pleasanter and gayer works. *The Way to Keep Him* [1] (1760, enlarged 1761) is one of the best comedies of the time, put together with unusual skill. Our fancy is set working when we read that Garrick played Lovemore, the errant husband, and his friend 'Pivy,' Mrs. Clive, the chattering lady's-maid Muslin; other parts being taken by Palmer, by Mrs. Cibber, and by Mr. and Mrs. Yates. The play was printed in a revised shape in 1785 and dedicated to Mrs. Abington. Murphy was then nearing sixty, and the dialogue shows a veteran hand.

The moral is professedly the sound one, that husbands should remain in love with their wives, and that wives should show themselves pleasant and bright-tempered in the house. One of the husbands, Sir Bashful Constant, a *parvenu*, is devoted, and ashamed of his devotion, to his lady, a fashionable cardplaying spendthrift dame, one of whose admirers and pursuers is Lovemore. Sir Bashful plays into his hands; Lovemore neglects his own wife with wounding politeness, evades her request that he will dine at home, and yawns through her reproaches. Here, no doubt, was Garrick's chance:

> You reason very—you reason admir—ably—admi—rably—always —all—always—gay—and—enter—taining——(*going to sleep*).

Lovemore also courts, under another name, and pretending to be a peer, a vivacious and perfectly honest widow, Lady Belmour. In an excellent scene she confronts him with his wife, effecting a formal introduction to the supposed Lord Etherington. Over the scene flits one Sir Brilliant Fashion, who makes vapid love all round and bursts in on the delicate situations. At last the offenders are shown up, forgiven, and reconciled, on the easiest terms. The 'comedy of sentiment' is well in sight, with its cheap moral; the cynicism of Congreve is much more satisfactory; but the ball is tossed about with a surprising deftness.

Murphy had made his name by work of a more obvious kind : the *Apprentice* (1756), a stage-struck youth whose talk is chiefly quotations from the poets : and the *Upholsterer* (1758), depicting a Mr. Quidnunc, whose talk, like that of Squire Western's sister, is all politics and warfare. Garrick played the ignominious Mr. Pamphlet, who writes a dedication to a great man for money and a libel on him for more money. These are pale ghosts of the comedy of humours. Murphy also drew on

> Molière, of old, and still, with rapture seen,
> The legislator of the comic scene.

In the *School for Guardians*, suggested by *L'École des Maris*, he presents *two* elderly gentlemen who wish to marry their unwilling wards, are used by the young lovers to carry messages, and laugh at one another's discomfiture. *Le Cocu imaginaire* gives a hint for *All in the Wrong* (1761), a rather farcical study of groundless jealousy. In *Know Your Own Mind*, a mazy comedy with rapid changes of partners, there is a pleasing airy lady, a distant relative of Millamant. In the *Choice*, an ingenious trifle, an obdurate father is charmed by his son's penniless wife, who introduces herself as a stranger ; begins to court her himself ; but is good-natured when the trick is explained.

XI

The almost forgotten musical farces of Isaac Bickerstaffe (? 1735–? 1812) were amongst the best things of the kind since the *Beggar's Opera*. The rhymes are easy and the dialogue is quick. Bickerstaffe was at one time associated with Garrick, and passes across the pages of Boswell ; his plays had their vogue ; but he fell under suspicion of criminal disgrace, fled the country and ceased to be mentioned. His profuse writings were never collected. Most of them are short operettas wholly or partly in verse. *Love in a Village* (1762), *Love in the City*, *Thomas and Sally*, and *The Maid of the Mill* (1765), are stray examples. The last of these is one of the many stage manipulations of *Pamela* ; but there is little left of the story, for the dubious ' Mr. B.' has become a good and virtuous gentleman. *The Ephesian Matron* is a low doggerel version of that far-spread anecdote. But when Bickerstaffe had a good author to lean upon he was capable of better things. *The Padlock* (1768) is a well-wrought little piece, based on *The Jealous Estremaduran*, in the *Exemplary Novels* of Cervantes. The old Don Diego has in charge the young girl Leonora, having covenanted with her

parents ' either to return her to them spotless ' together with a dowry, or to make her his ' true and lawful wife.' He chooses the latter course, and Leonora, though little interested, is ready to acquiesce. Meantime a young gallant Leander, who has pursued her to Mass and thrummed under her window, takes advantage of Don Diego's absence to clamber into the house, despite the large padlock fixed on the door. He wheedles the black servant and the duenna who is left in charge, and by whose overtures he is disconcerted. No harm is done, for Don Diego comes back too soon. But, on reflection, the old gentleman acts handsomely by the young couple, and makes them happy. The drunken negro, Mungo, is a telling operatic figure, and Bickerstaffe, not Cervantes, must have the credit for some pretty snatches of song. Leonora trills away, with a bird on her finger :

> Say, little foolish, fluttering thing,
> Whither, ah ! whither, would you wing
> Your airy flight ?
> Stay here, and sing
> Your mistress to delight.
> No, no, no,
> Sweet Robin, you shall not go :
> Where, you wanton, could you be
> Half so happy as with me ?

And in one of Leander's serenades there is a breath of the older music :

> O could I but, like Jove of old,
> Transform myself to showery gold ;
> Or in a swan my passion shroud,
> Or wrap it in an orient cloud ;
> What locks, what bars, should then impede
> Or keep me from my charming maid ?

Bickerstaffe's *Lionel and Clarissa* (1768) is another light thing of the same class. But his best work, in the true drama, is *The Hypocrite* (1768). Much of this, as he avows, comes straight from Colley Cibber's *Nonjuror* (1717), while some is from Molière ; but the changes are noteworthy. The *Nonjuror*, says Bickerstaffe,

> hath ever been reckoned an excellent comedy ; but, being written to expose a party, it was no longer interesting, because the folly and roguery it designed to ridicule no longer existed. It was thought that it might be rendered agreeable to the present times by once more having resort to Molière ; and with that view I have endeavoured to substitute his celebrated character of Tartuffe, in the room of Dr. Wolf . . . Mawworm in this play is written by me, and

scarcely anything more. . . . The character of Dr. Cantwell, as it here stands, is an almost verbal translation from Molière, as old Lady Lambert is the counterpart of Madame Pernelle.

Bickerstaffe cleverly transplants these personages. Cibber had already taken toll of Molière, and the debt is now increased. The famous handkerchief in the *Tartuffe* still plays its part, in a scene where the foolish dowager observes, of Dr. Cantwell, that 'he 's a good man, and knows what indecency is.' And the impish heroine retorts, 'Yes, indeed, I believe he does, better than any one in this house.' Such healthy, knock-me-down, British repartee belongs to the age of Smollett. Dr. Cantwell, on his first entry, calls, not for his *haïre*, but for 'the last hymn I composed'; and the frontispiece to the play in Mrs. Inchbald's *British Theatre* shows him exclaiming to his dupes: 'I am but a sheep; but my bleatings shall be heard afar off.' Bickerstaffe, as he implies, has dropped the politics which figure in Cibber's play: his Cantwell is no longer a Roman spy and agent, but a Methodistical hypocrite. He uses the jargon of 'enthusiasm'; and so, in a soapier form, does his creature Mawworm. It is clear that both Cibber and his follower drew not only on France, but on the native, Jonsonian tradition. It would be pleasant to track the figure of the religious humbug down from Chaucer's Pardoner, through Zeal-of-the-Land Busy, to Mr. Pecksniff and Mr. Bulstrode. The eighteenth-century satirists are apt to lay on the colours crudely in the manner of the pavement artist.

Robert Dodsley's tragedy *Cleone* will be described; but he also produced some slight and neat comic entertainments. *The King and the Miller of Mansfield* (1737) is suggested by balladry, and has a faint but genuine breath of the greenwood, which is welcome after a long course of the manners of the town. The king is a ballad king; that is, he is no particular king, and he is benighted in the forest and challenged by the miller, who is the king's servant. He represents himself as a courtier astray from the hunting-party, is welcomed in the miller's cottage, relishes the simple scene, and, when his followers come in and he is identified, rights a wrong that has been done by one of his lords to a country girl. He also knights the miller, as Sir John Cockle; and, in a sequel which is of less account, we meet with *Sir John Cockle at Court*. *The Blind Beggar of Bethnal Green* (1741) is a little musical play in which the beggar is a disguised noble and rebuffs the attempts of sundry persons to buy his beautiful daughter. Dodsley, though he visited his friend Shenstone at the Leasowes, was a town bird; and yet there is

something more than artifice in his country scenes. In *The Toyshop* (1735) he is on his own ground; it is a 'dramatic satire' on the smaller vanities of the town. The master of a shopful of trifles moralises to his customers and makes his profits. There is a dame who weeps more for a dead pet dog than for a husband, and a beau who desires a snuffbox with an amorous device upon the lid. A 'virtuoso' looks in, and is supplied with a phial with one of the 'tears which Alexander wept when he could do no more mischief,' and, what is stranger, with 'the tune which Orpheus played to the devil when he charmed back his wife.'

XII

Little nonsense [1] of any merit was written during this period; there was no Carroll or Edward Lear; but Henry Carey, the rhymer and musician, makes his contribution. He is not now credited with the composition of *God Save the King*. His operettas, such as *Amelia* and *Nancy*, are well enough of their kind; but much better is the *Dragon of Wantley*. In this small burlesque the 'dragon crosses the stage,' and is slain, at the petition of Margery Gubbins, by Moore of Moore-Hall:

> O save us all,
> Moore of Moore-Hall!
> Or else this cursed dragon
> Will plunder our houses,
> Our daughters and spouses,
> And leave us the devil a rag on.

Carey has a Thackerayan gift for little rhymes, and in 1727 wrote a *Lilliputian Ode on their Majesties' Accession*:

Smile, smile, Blest Isle! Grief past At last Halcyon Comes on. New King, Bells ring; New Queen, Blest scene! Britain Again revives And thrives; Fear flies, Stocks rise; Wealth flows, Wit grows. Strange pack, Sent back; Own folks Crack jokes. Those out May pout; Those in Will grin. Great, small, Pleased all! God send No end To line Divine Of George and Caroline!

Also, in his *Namby-Pamby*, Carey efficiently mocked the style of Ambrose Philips; but *Chrononhotonthologos* (1734), with its Rigdumfunnidos and Aldiborontiphoscophornio, is more than a nursery classic. Like *Tom Thumb the Great* (1731), this skit was aimed at the inflated drama, and outlived its victims. These are described in the prologue:

> The poetasters of these modern days
> Who with big bellowing bombast rend our ears,
> Which, stript of sound, quite void of sense appears;

Or else their fiddle-faddle numbers flow
Serenely dull, elaborately low.

Sally in our Alley, which needs no praises, and which comes as fresh from the well as anything in Burns, describes a scene taken from life, and the author's note upon it is the best commentary :

The real occasion was this : The shoemaker's prentice, making holiday with his sweetheart, treated her with a sight of Bedlam, the puppet-shows, the flying-chairs, and all the elegancies of Moorfields ; from whence proceeding to a farthing pie-house, he gave her a collation of buns, cheese-cakes, gammon of bacon, stuft beef, and bottled ale : through all which scenes the author dodged them (charmed with the simplicity of their courtship) ; from whence he drew this little sketch of nature. But being then young and obscure, he was very much ridiculed by some of his acquaintance for this performance ; which nevertheless made its way into the polite world, and amply recompensed him by the applause of the divine Addison, who was pleased more than once to mention it with approbation.

Carey, who died in 1743, does not date the poem ; but it clearly came during the lean years of lyric verse, and ranks among the more joyous and natural pieces which are noticed elsewhere (Ch. XIII.). He also wrote a pleasingly selfish drinking-ditty, to this effect :

With an honest old friend,
And a merry old song,
And a flask of old port,
Let me sit the night long,
And laugh at the malice of those who repine
That they must swig porter, while I can drink wine.

Carey often made his own melodies, and learned that feeling for the value of sounds and syllables which leaves the verse more musical for those who merely read it.

CHAPTER X

COMEDY (*continued*)

I

No sharp line, it is evident, can be drawn between irresponsible comedy and comedy with a purpose. Even in a farce there may be the pleasure of pricking a bubble and showing up a pretence. Funniness, absurdity, folly, hypocrisy, vice, and fraud form an insensibly darkening series, of which the aim becomes, in Lessing's phrase, to do men good through laughter, *durch Lachen bessern*. Only, in a comedy, there must be no capital punishment; and yet there must be *some* punishment, or pretence of it. True poetic comedy is hardly to be found in the eighteenth century. In *Twelfth Night* we move in another and more aery sphere, where the discords are resolved and the sense of justice is satisfied without any too painful suspense or recourse to serious measures. Equally rare is a play like *Volpone*, where the shadows are so strong that the term comedy seems a misnomer. In Fielding, Foote, and others there is no lack of moral crusading, or of personal victimising, of a more or less truculent kind; a rough justice that is often injustice. In the comedy of sentiment, or sensibility,[1] there is just the opposite dispensation: let your villain only weep and plead guilty, and he is embraced and rewarded.

Sentiment is a slippery term to define; a simpler name for this kind of play, in its origin, is the comedy of good feeling. To understand its later, or degenerate forms, in the age of Goldsmith, it is necessary to glance back at Colley Cibber and Steele. It began as a protest against the callous comedy of wit, and the object was to humanise the audience; to address, or to create, the houseful of normal decent people, who were easily moved, respected average virtue, and probably read the *Spectator*. The same good feeling is required in the *dramatis personae*, and the action is directed to bringing this, unexpectedly, to light. The hero is often a wild fellow with a good heart, a kind of inferior Richard Steele: he may be a gambler, a spendthrift, a rake, or, for choice, an erring husband.

He must go wrong, and be tried, and at last be forgiven ; the business of the wife is to wait and to forgive. There is the danger that *we* may not forgive him so cheaply. Many of the later playwrights went wrong here. They would tell us to clap a fellow on the back because he has only *tried*, but not managed, to commit a treachery or a seduction, and then repents of his intention ; or when he has *mistaken* a woman of honour for a light one, and has been good enough to apologise. But a sketch of Cibber's *Careless Husband*, one of the best plays of the century, will show the pattern. It was produced as early as 1704, but long continued to be acted and had much influence. It was Cibber who ' first deliberately made the pathetic treatment of a moral sentiment the basis of the action of a comic drama ' (A. W. Ward).

The *Careless Husband* opens in a strain of cheerful, rather cold-blooded, wit. Sir Charles Easy has two mistresses at once. One of them is his wife's waiting-woman, in his own house. Lady Easy knows, but she waits and says nothing, and hopes to win her man back by patience. Sir Charles, however, has the grand air, and seems to be wholly cynical ; to his wife he is only too polite. So far we are in the atmosphere of the old comedy. But Cibber assumes that there is latent good feeling in Sir Charles, and the business of the sequel is to fan the spark. This is done with a conscious dexterity that does not wholly convince us. Sir Charles shows much energy in giving sensible generous advice to other people ; and so is introduced the second plot. A cruel but most amusing coquette, Lady Betty Modish, torments the worthy Lord Morelove, and mocks at his efforts to pretend indifference. But she likes him ; and, thanks to the good offices of Sir Charles, all ends well. Easy himself becomes humane, repents, reforms, and is welcomed back by his lady. Both couples are reconciled, and the play (forgetting its beginning) ends with a scene of general emotion and effusion. This is only saved from sheer mawkishness by one rounded and perfect figure of dandiacal comedy, Lord Foppington. He has been used, and thrown over, by Lady Betty ; but he does not care ; he only cares that Lord Foppington should meet every situation with *aplomb* ; and he is left joining the hands of the lovers. Cibber took the part himself, and must have put into it all his knowledge of the frivolous world. He was in debt, no doubt, to the Lord Foppington, the unexcelled, of Vanbrugh's *Relapse*, but he gives him new life, and new attitudes.

Many years afterwards Cibber resumed this pattern in the *Provoked Husband* (1728). Vanbrugh, who died in 1726, had

shown signs of solemnity, repenting of the freedom of his early plays; and had left, says Cibber, some 'scenes unpruned or half-contrived,' entitled *A Journey to London*; his conviction now being that

> Though vice was natural, 'twas never meant
> The stage should show it, but for punishment.

Cibber had completed the play, added the new title, and shown himself more merciful than Vanbrugh to the giddy Lady Townly. She wastes money and distracts her husband; and Vanbrugh, with the zeal of a convert, was for letting her sink altogether, and for turning her out of house and home. But for the comedy of sentiment this would not do; and the genial Cibber, instead, permits her to repent and be forgiven, with many tears. His humorous expression is: 'with much ado I preserved the lady's chastity.' Another figure, the good *ami de famille*, Mr. Manly, who makes peace between the Townlys, and who also, in the underplot (where the scene is more riotous) exposes an adventurer, became familiar in this kind of drama.

Steele, Cibber's ally in the campaign, is still kinder to his characters. His work has not the edge of Cibber's, and his humour is milder. But he too deals in reconciliations and repentances, and the language of sensibility is again heard. In *The Tender Husband* (1705) there is another feather-headed wife, Mrs. Clerimont, who finally exclaims,

> Therefore I kneel—I weep—I am convinced. [*Kneels.*
> *Cler. Sen.* Then kneel, and weep no more, my fairest—my reconciled! [*Takes her up, embracing her.*

And in *The Conscious Lovers* (1722) the idly jealous Myrtle, who has challenged his best friend Bevil, listens to his explanation and his sermon against duelling,[1] and comes to a better mind. And Bevil is greeted by the father of his own lady, whom he has saved from distress, as 'Excellent young man, that could be at once a lover to her beauty and a parent to her virtue.'

II

The plays of Cibber and Steele continued to be acted; but their influence on production was delayed. The chief practitioners of the comedy of sentiment were Hugh Kelly [2] (1739-1777) and Richard Cumberland (1732-1811); Mrs. Elizabeth Griffith and Mrs. Hannah Cowley came in their wake. All these writers grew up during the period of Richardson's greatest

popularity. A nicer dissection, and a fuller unbosoming, of the emotions was the order of the day, and spread from fiction to the drama. The process, when applied to comedy, threatened to be anything but amusing. Kelly and Cumberland attempted, with varying success, to avoid the pitfalls, and neither of them is wanting in comic talent or scenic skill.

The most interesting of these plays is *False Delicacy*, produced in 1768 by Garrick. Kelly, an active journalist and pamphleteer, was one of the many Irish-born dramatists. The piece was presented as a rival to the *Good-Natured Man*, which appeared a few days afterwards. The quarrels of the theatre, and the dispute between Goldsmith and Kelly, do not concern us so much as their difference in temper. In the *Good-Natured Man* our sympathies are never perplexed for a moment. But *False Delicacy* is a double-edged title. The motto of the piece, given in the last scene, is 'the triumph of good sense over delicacy'; but delicacy of what sort? Kelly himself appears to be in doubt. 'I don't know,' says one of the characters, 'anything it does besides making people miserable; yet somehow, foolish as it is, one can't help liking it.' Good sense, that is, is supposed to effect the cure of sentiment; but perhaps it may be wrong, and sentiment right.

False Delicacy was acted about a century before George Meredith's *Emilia in England* was published; and the nice doubts of Lady Betty Lambton and Lord Winworth compare oddly with the 'fine shades' of the sisters Pole. 'The more they change, the more they are the same thing.' Lady Betty, a widow, likes Winworth, but holds that 'a woman of real delicacy should never admit a second impression on her heart.' So, in the name of 'good sense,' her delicacy has to be outwitted: and her impatient friend Mrs. Harley, also a widow, plots to that effect. She is mocked adroitly and manœuvred, after various failures, into following her inclination. 'Good sense' is supposed to applaud; but naturally the problem, which was quite out of Murphy's range, is shirked. We hear nothing of the process, aided by time, by which a gentle mind may come to think of a second loyalty as possible. It is probably too gradual a change to represent without violence in a play. But Winworth also has his delicacy, which is more genuine despite the formal phrasing. Giving up hope, he turns to Lady Betty's poor companion, Hortensia Marchmont, who has been sympathetic throughout, and whom he regards 'with an eye of more than common friendship.' Though loth to seem to make her the 'offer of a rejected heart,' at last he enlists, as

a pleader, no other than Lady Betty. She, in one very skilful scene, fancies at first that Winworth is still courting herself; gives her 'concurrence' to what she thinks a proposal; and saves her secret just in time. She then ruefully agrees to plead with Hortensia; and in another scene, no less telling, she swings between hope and alarm, even as Hortensia swings between reluctance (inasmuch as she loves another young man) and compliance. At last, to Lady Betty's dismay, she does accept Winworth. Then Mrs. Harley plays a desperate last card; she contrives an interview between Winworth and Lady Betty; who, thinking that her friend has betrayed her secret already, lets it out to him. The ceremonious speech of courtship in those days is heard at its best. It is wrought up, no doubt, for the boards; but the memoirs and letters of the time show it is not all unreal, and it went on for a long time, even into the next century:

Winworth. And does your ladyship really honour me with any degree of a tender partiality?

Lady B. The question is needless, my Lord, after what Mrs. Harley has acquainted you with.

Winworth. Mrs. Harley, madam, has not acquainted me with particulars of any nature——

Lady B. No? . . .

All, in any case, is now cleared up, and Hortensia is free as well. Kelly again shows that he can depict real 'delicacy.' The pleasantest scene is that in which Hortensia, ever so kindly, rejects the elderly Mr. Cecil, who wonders whether she would marry him, and who puts to her a visibly imaginary case of 'love misgraffed in respect of years.' Kelly's play has much more brains behind it than most of these forgotten pieces.

His *School for Wives* (1773) also leaves us with mixed feelings. He vindicates, to good effect, two figures that were much traduced upon the stage. He produces a genial honest lawyer, and also a faithful Irish servant who is comic and not merely a butt. His Belville, a fickle husband, is carefully drawn: a man whose passions drive each other out, who flies from one revulsion to another, and who is perfectly sensible, even while he strays, of the goodness of his wife. But Belville, who tries and fails to seduce a young lady, settles down at last, more by good luck than otherwise, and is let off easily. This kind of *unearned forgiveness*, preceded neither by penitence nor by penance, is the canker of the comedy of sentiment; and another is the almost invariable meanness of the sins that are forgiven or white-

washed. The handsomer side of sentiment is seen in *A Word to the Wise* (1770), the last of Kelly's plays that need be mentioned. Sir George Hastings, apparently a mere coxcomb and ladykiller, suddenly proves his generosity. A young lady whose parents have driven her to promise him marriage pleads with him for her release, telling him that her affections are elsewhere. She also persuades him to break the news to her infuriated father. He is touched, tells the old gentleman that *he* wishes to throw over the lady, and is duly challenged; but all, of course, ends well.

As a pendant to these dramas may be mentioned William Whitehead's *School for Lovers* (1762), founded on *Le Testament* of Fontenelle. The situation recalls that in Garrick's *Guardian*. An oldish man, Sir John Dorilant, has a young ward bequeathed to him by her father as his future wife; she is to lose the estate if she declines. Sir John magnanimously cancels the bond and seeks a husband for her elsewhere; but she is forced to let him learn that she loves him for herself. Whitehead was not a genius, but he was a gentleman; he manages the affair with humour and feeling; and we can wish that he had done more such work instead of producing *Creusas* and *Roman Fathers*. But the chief practitioner in sentiment on the later stage was Richard Cumberland [1] (1732-1811), whose features, drawn by Sheridan in his Sir Fretful Plagiary and by Goldsmith in *Retaliation*, have thus become slightly, but irremediably, distorted.

III

Richard Cumberland's motley career as a student, a playwright and essayist, a pamphleteer, a novelist, and a negotiator, is set forth in the two volumes of *Memoirs* (1806-7) published in his old age. It is a vain, rambling record, and far from trustworthy, but full of matter and entertainment. The ample index bears agreeable testimony to the author's virtues:

'his disinterestedness in never having been betrayed to accept anything which delicacy could possibly interpret as a gratuity'; 'his accuracy and veracity in detailing the circumstances of this negotiation'; 'his study matured by age and experience'; 'never wrote a single line to puff or praise himself, or to decry a brother dramatist.'

Cumberland relates that his friend Garrick called him 'the man without a skin'; and this is the trait seized upon in the *Critic*. But, to judge by his immense complacency, he was not so ill provided with skins; and he had his share of the good nature

that sometimes goes with great self-esteem. He does not carp overmuch; he is a sound observer, and preserves for us many vivid scenes and portraits. He praises the hospitality of Bubb Dodington, and describes his 'bed, encanopied with peacock hangings,' with its surroundings,

> a carpeting of gold and silver embroidery, which too glaringly betrayed its derivation from coat, waistcoat, and breeches by the testimony of pockets, button-holes, and loops, with other equally incontrovertible witnesses, subpoenaed from the tailor's shop-board.

Also, without a sign of irony, he records of Bubb that 'his favourite author was Tacitus,' who was 'always upon his table'; and we can think of the arch-turncoat studying the elegist of republican purity.

He writes with good sense on fiction and the drama. His novels *Arundel* (1789) and *Henry* (1795) are unluckily leaden, the latter being slavishly modelled on Fielding's 'comic epic in prose.' His view of comedy is temperately didactic, and shows some of the changes in the moral taste of the century:

> Congreve, Farquhar, and some others have made vice and villainy so playful and amusing, that either they could not find [*sic*] in their hearts to punish them, or, not caring how wicked they were, so long as they were witty, paid no attention to what became of them. . . . Poetical justice, which has armed the tragic poet with the weapons of death, and commissioned him to wash out the offence in the blood of the offender, has not left the comic writer without his instruments of vengeance; for surely, if he knows how to employ the authority that is in him, the scourge of ridicule alone is sharp enough for the chastisement of any crimes, which can fall within his province to exhibit.

Cumberland's periodical, the *Observer* (1785), contains some appreciative papers on the older drama, from Shakespeare down to Rowe, and shows a keen sense of the theatre; and, as a middleman between the learned and polite public, he translates some fragments of Menander, and discourses easily on the *Agamemnon* and the *Clouds*. But Cumberland concerns us most as a dramatist, who, as he tells us, saw that a mere show of humours or oddities was out of date, and made up his mind to reanimate the comic stage; to make 'worthy characters amiable, but not insipid,' and to 'put men in good humour with one another.' Another point in his programme was to present in a sympathetic light some of the traditional victims of comedy, and of 'national, professional, or religious prejudice'; or, as he solemnly puts it, to 'reconcile the world to them, and them to the world.' This

is not very promising ; yet Cumberland's *vis comica* is not extinguished by his moral purpose.

One of the ' victims ' whom he protects is the henpecked husband ; and in the *Brothers* (1769) the tables are turned on the termagant wife by Sir Benjamin Dove, who might be described as a pocket Petruchio, or as a Bob Acres whose valour does *not* ' ooze out, as it were, at the palms of his hands.' He seems a small submissive gentleman ; and his lady, fancying herself insulted by Belford Junior, harries Sir Benjamin into sending a challenge. It is a sore struggle ; he finds that his ' plaguy sword sticks hard in the scabbard,' but finally draws and attacks. The amused Belford sees that he ' only wants to build some reputation with his wife upon this rencounter.' They begin to fight ; the lady shrieks and interposes ; and, in a scene suggested by Colman's *Jealous Wife*, Sir Benjamin, now sure of his manhood, tames the shrew. She does not, indeed, show much fight, and is an unattractive Katherine. There is also a villain who is exposed and is let off too readily ; but the *Brothers* is hardly, in the main, a ' comedy of sentiment.'

In the *West Indian* (1771), Cumberland's best-known drama, he breaks new ground, and in one point anticipates *St. Ronan's Well*. His aim is to create sympathy for that much-abused personage, the Nabob or *richard*, who came back from the East or the West and made himself offensive. But Young Belcour the West Indian cuts a poor figure. He arrives in London as an innocent ; he is deceived by a pair of swindlers ; and he is led to suppose that the good and innocent Louisa is a woman of the town. He behaves accordingly ; has, naturally, to fight her brother ; and, when undeceived and penitent, is forgiven, with the usual distressing celerity, by all concerned. The best character is the light-spirited soldier of fortune, Major O'Flaherty. So many matches are made in the finale that he exclaims, ' O' my conscience, I think we shall all be related by and by.' Cumberland, like most playwrights of his time, comes to grief over the language of love-making ; but his dialogue is not much worse than that of Sheridan's Julia and Faulkland :

Belcour. Nay, lovely but obdurate, does not this example soften ?
Louisa. What can you ask for more ? Accept my hand, accept my willing heart.
Belcour. O bliss inutterable ! . . .

Two out of the crowd of Cumberland's later plays may be mentioned to show his versatility. In the *Jew*[1] (1794) he is once more the champion of the derided classes. Mr. Sheva is no

lay figure; he is quite as much alive, at least theatrically speaking, as Mr. Riah in *Our Mutual Friend*. He is a miser in appearance, and lives meanly; but devotes himself to secretly helping good young couples and thwarting their flinty parents. It says much for Cumberland that he makes Mr. Sheva amusing. In 1795 he produced the *Wheel of Fortune*. Kotzebue was now the rage, and comedy was expected to strike a more violent note. The part of Penruddock called forth the melodramatic energy of Kemble and other actors. He is an injured misanthrope, a scowling hermit, who nurses and takes his vengeance. But he is melted by the youthful frankness, and by the tender love passages, of the boy whose father has wronged him; and whom he endows and starts in life. Cumberland dealt in sentiment to the last; but sentiment now coagulates, so to speak, with the 'powerful' style which was to flourish in the drama of the following age. Penruddock's gloom is thus painted:

> thoughts uncollected; jarring resolutions; avarice, revenge, ambition, all the turbid passions aiming, like soldiers roused from sleep, to rush into the battle.

IV

In Mrs. Elizabeth Griffith (?1720-1793) the comedy of indulgence takes a different turn. The *Platonic Wife* (1765) is a protest, in the name of sense and right feeling, against harbouring too romantic views of marriage. Lady Frankland has fed herself on the 'refined sentiments' of the tale of Héloïse: an error, we hear, but the error of a 'delicate and elevated mind.' She parts from a good husband who declines to 'deify' her; and she is dying to experience a 'sentimental passion.' The grave Sir William Belville offers to provide it; but when his language grows too strong, Lady Frankland awakes from her 'dream,' sends him off, and goes back to her husband. She has, however, laid herself open to Belville's retort that 'the refinement of a Platonic passion but ill agrees with the slightness of your conduct.' The story is suggested by Marmontel's *L'Heureux Divorce*; and in her *School for Rakes* (1769) Mrs. Griffith makes use of the *Eugénie* of Beaumarchais. Here the real, though not the nominal, hero is the broken-down gentleman, Mr. Frampton, torn between loyalty to his master and disgust at his master's villainies. Frampton speaks like a living man. There are also some spirited humours, furnished by a Welsh brother and sister who fly out against each other;

and the sister is another of those praters upon politics, who seem to have learnt the trick from Fielding's Miss Western. The wicked Lord Eustace at last repents, in the usual fashion; but enough of these snivelling finales.

Here it may be well to revert to Goldsmith's demonstration in his essay on *Sentimental Comedy*. It was published in 1772, a few months before *She Stoops to Conquer*, and four years after the *Good-Natured Man*. In 1780, speaking of her own play, *A Chapter of Accidents*, Miss Sophia Lee remarked that 'sentiment was now exploded, and I therefore sought to diversify it [the piece] with humours.' But sentiment was already suspect when Goldsmith assailed it; he only gave classical expression to current murmurs; nor was he wholly just to it; and though he helped to laugh it off the boards, it was by no means at once uprooted. His great argument was the simple one that comedy existed to amuse, and that it had ceased to do so for two reasons. First of all, it had been driven by 'domestic' tragedy out of its own preserve. In Goldsmith's words,

> the principal question therefore is, whether, in describing low or middle life, an exhibition of its follies be not preferable to a detail of its calamities?

For, he says, we 'do not so strongly sympathise' with the distresses of 'low or middle life':

> While we melt for Belisarius, we scarce give halfpence to the beggar who accosts us in the street. The one has our pity; the other our contempt.

Goldsmith, who certainly would not despise a beggar, somewhat confuses his argument; for the question of class is neither here nor there. His real drift is, secondly, that comedy is not comedy if its main effect is distressing; and that the comedy which is chiefly concerned with assaulting the tender feelings is a bastard kind:

> Though we should give these pieces another name, it will not mend their efficacy. It will continue a kind of mulish production, with all the defects of its opposite parents, and marked with sterility.

But two more of the writers who survived Goldsmith and his criticisms deserve a word, and their productions are certainly not mulish.

Mrs. Hannah Cowley (1743-1809) is unfavourably known as the 'Anna Matilda' whose Muse was derided by Gifford and the wits; and she describes herself as 'a woman tracing with

feeble steps the borders of the Parnassian mount.' Her comedies, after this, disappoint us pleasantly. She is not strong in her plots ; but she can write with spirit and ingenuity. Her first play, the *Runaway* (1776), is gratefully dedicated to Garrick, who launched it not long before his retirement. There is a refreshing rural air about this piece, of which the scene is a garden. Old Mr. Hargrave, for commercial reasons, wishes to marry his son to a pedantic elderly Lady Dinah. But he opens the plan to young George in language so delicate that the boy supposes his father to be himself the suitor. Lady Dinah, accordingly, is amazed at George's shy professions of duty and filial respect. George, in fact, loves a mysterious damsel, Emily Morley, who has run away from a tyrannical uncle. No matter for the cock-and-bull plot which is framed by the jealous Lady Dinah in order to discredit Emily, or for the uncle who appears from nowhere in a coach-and-six. The yarn finishes gaily ; and an incidental character, the merry coquette Arabella, keeps it going.

There is more device in the *Belle's Stratagem* (1780), and a genuine chance for the actress of the ' belle,' Miss Letitia Hardy. She has been destined from her childhood to marry Doricourt ; but hitherto her father has wisely kept the two apart. Her aim is to capture Doricourt, a bored sophisticated youth, who prefers French graces in a wife. When the pair first meet, for the formal signing of papers, he sees in Letitia ' only a fine girl,' without fire or charm. So she forms her first stratagem, which is to act the country hoyden, and make Doricourt hate her ; for hate can be turned, more easily than indifference, into liking. But he is startled, not attracted ; and then, in more conventional fashion, the lady contrives that he shall fall in love with her, as an unknown beauty at a mask. Mrs. Cowley, who wrote more comedies in the day of Holcroft and O'Keeffe, has her share not only of ' sentiment,' but also of that natural language and feeling for which Goldsmith had set the unapproachable pattern.

V

Lastly, there are the comedies of General John Burgoyne, the victim of Saratoga. The first of these, the *Maid of the Oaks*, was played in 1774 at his seat ' The Oaks,' near Epsom, and in the next year at Drury Lane. This little *fête champêtre*, or pastoral opera, is a pleasing relief after the sneers, so frequent in the drama, against country life. There are tuneable ditties,

and also a good hunting-catch, ' Come rouse from your trances,' of which one stanza begins :

> Hark Jowler, hark Rover,
> See Reynard breaks cover,
> The hunters fly over the ground;

and there is a general air of bustle, festivity, and mirth. The scene is a wedding, with lamplighters, decorators, and bridesmaids ; ' they have sent,' we hear, ' for more roses, and there is not one left within twenty miles.' The story is nothing, but it is agreeable. The bride, Maria, has been brought up mysteriously as the ward of the wealthy Mr. Oldworth. He is in fact her father, but is afraid of fortune-hunting suitors. The names of the characters have a suitable flavour. Maria's disinterested lover, Sir Harry Groveby, has a crusty but kindly uncle, who comes in order to save him from marrying the supposed pauper. Old Groveby meets Maria, thinking her a stranger, and is himself captivated, according to a good and ancient device of the comic stage. But he is soon found giving his blessing to the young pair. The gayest figure is Lady Bab Lardoon, a part which was played by Mrs. Abington. ' Though she has been but three days out of London, she is as uneasy as a mole in sunshine, and would expire, if she did not soon dive into her old element again.' This tricksy lady poses as a rustic damsel, in order to bring down the vanity of the travelled Mr. Dupeley, who thinks that his wits are ' too quick ' for any lady. In the *Lord of the Manor* (1780) there is again the country atmosphere ; and some of the songs are sprightly enough to have been credited to Burgoyne's friend Sheridan. The piece, the author explains, is to be a true ' English opera,' with the ditties not encroaching on the story.

The *Heiress* (1786) was written after Burgoyne's return to England, and is a less high-spirited and also a more ambitious work. There is some of the formal balanced talk which is only satisfactory when it is filed and sandpapered by Congreve or Sheridan :

> To what a dilemma have you reduced me, Lady Emily ? If I advance, I perish by my temerity ; and it is out of my power to retreat.

Yet we see why the play was admired by Horace Walpole and pleased the town. There is an old cynic, who is driven to admit that human nature is not always selfish ; a swindling lawyer who is foiled ; two offensive flatterers, rudely drawn : a grotesque French valet ; and the witty Lady Emily, who seems

flighty but is serious within. These characters are from the common stock, but their talk is nimble enough. There are also two good young people, brother and sister; and some trite confusions arise while their relationship is hidden. And there is one very adroit eavesdropping scene. Miss Alscrip, the heiress, wishing to try her unknown *fiancé*, Lord Gayville, sends her poor companion, Miss Alton, to personate her in the first interview, and listens to the talk. She learns that Miss Alton is the very lady whom Lord Gayville has already pursued under another name and who now shames him into honour and true love. He declares himself frankly; and the heiress turns and reviles Miss Alton, only to be met with her pointed scorn. Here, then, is a trace of the comedy of sentiment in its better guise. Burgoyne may not unworthily close this sketch of the forgotten drama. There remains Sheridan, whose blaze has dulled these modest candles.

VI

This long and yet far from exhaustive account is meant to persuade the reader that there is much life and fun, and some literature too, in the mass of pieces that are now lost to the stage. No persuasion is required when he reaches Sheridan.[1] Every one reads Sheridan and goes to see him played. Three at least of his dramas are perennial. Few of our playwrights since Shakespeare have had a surer instinct for the theatre; and, after Congreve, no playwright has been a more brilliant artificer in words. Sheridan has less real style than Congreve; he has not the same feeling for the volatile essence of language. He studied Congreve with profit, and he might or might not have written such a sentence as this:

> But a sedate, a thinking villain, whose black blood runs temperately bad, what excuse can clear?

But surely not this:

> *Sir Sampson.* Did not I beget you? and might I not have chosen whether I would have begot you or no? 'Oons, who are you? whence came you? what brought you into the world? how came you here, sir? . . .
>
> *Valentine.* I know no more why I came than you do why you called me.

Congreve is often a very stony writer; but his humanity is not so much deficient as suppressed; and he has these touches of far-reaching irony which carry us clean away from the occasion,

which is the mere dialogue of a father with a prodigal. More could hardly be said in so few monosyllables. Sheridan gains, however, before the world, not only by his wit, which though more obvious is still wonderful, and by his open generosity of temper, but because he makes everything easy. His plots unroll like a ribbon, while Congreve's are a tangled string. And his phrases tell at once in the corners of the gallery. With Congreve, before one felicity can be relished we are struggling with the next. And Sheridan, after all, is one of the greatest, if not the last, of the wits. The merriment of Goldsmith rises from deeper springs, and he has more artistic tact; he would never have shown such favour to a Charles Surface, and still less have written a *Pizarro*. But we easily forgive everything to the delightful Sheridan, with his rapidity, his coruscation, his Irish good sense, and the extraordinary burnish of his diction.

The comedies of Richard Brinsley Butler Sheridan (1751-1816) were produced between his marriage in 1773 to Elizabeth Linley and his entry into Parliament in 1780. They are the *Rivals*, played and printed in 1775; *St. Patrick's Day, or the Scheming Lieutenant*, 1775, printed 1788; the *Duenna*, 1775, printed 1783; *A Trip to Scarborough*, 1777, printed 1781; the *School for Scandal*, 1777, printed 1779 (?); and the *Critic*, 1779, printed 1781. The points in the *Critic* are sharpened by the writer's experience of the theatre; in 1776 he had become one of the owners of Drury Lane. His only other published play was the unhappy tragedy *Pizarro* (1799); but he also adapted for the boards a translation, called the *Stranger*, of Kotzebue's *Menschenhass und Reue*. Further, he left some notes and materials, of various and uncertain date, for a melodrama (boyish in character), for a rustic opera entitled the *Forester*, and for a comedy, *Affectation*. These fragments are saved by Thomas Moore, and are to be seen in his *Memoirs* of Sheridan (1825). Moore also prints a number of early scraps and experiments which show us Sheridan at his work-table and cast some little light on his precocious powers.

The juvenile essays, bits of rhetorical prose, Anstey-like rhymes on the humours of Bath, and other stuff of the kind, are not instructive; but the sketch of a 'burletta,' and the little lyrics, betoken more. The Italian opera, now in its decline, had invited doggerel parodies like the *Midas* (1762) of Kane O'Hara, whose *Golden Pippin* was before the town in 1773. Here the classic deities are turned upon the streets; and Sheridan also, in his *Jupiter*, throws his pellets at them. This mock operetta is, moreover, a rehearsal, with pleas and

defences by Mr. Simile the author, whose way it is 'to make the music first, and then make the sense to it afterwards.' We know how this idea was to be transformed in the *Critic*. Moore also preserves a pretty song, 'Dry be that tear, my gentlest love,' which shows a natural gift of rhythm. These remnants show Sheridan's habit as a polisher of words. He is one of the writers who work hard, in order to seem easy : in prose, to lead up to an epigram ; in verse, to be smooth and sliding, and to tinkle agreeably and singably ; and in both kinds, to save all trouble to the voice, to practise in full vowels and avoid gritty consonants, and to find a rhythm that will stay in the mind's ear and the memory. These aims are always felt in his verses, in his dialogue, and in his oratory. Only, there is less trace left of effort in the verse (however conventional the form) than in the prose. Here Sheridan does not try to conceal his labour, but offers us instead the pleasure of his artifice. He knows that here at least he does *not* seem easy ; but he does not care, nor do we.

VII

There is a great gulf between the best of these early fragments and the *Rivals*.[1] To have written such a play at twenty-four is a feat, though on a smaller scale, that reminds us of the prodigy of the *Pickwick Papers*. Sheridan could already put new blood into very old and weary types. Macklin and others had shown many a bawling facetious Irishman ; but Sir Lucius O'Trigger is of another caste. He does not talk loud ; his essence is gravity, not bluster ; and the serious business of his life is the duello—a business which Sheridan himself had already good reason to understand. If Sir Lucius laughs at Acres, it is with dry scorn, and for the pleasure of watching the wriggles of a coward :

Acres. But he has given me no provocation.

Sir Lucius. Now, I think he has given you the greatest provocation in the world.—Can a man commit a more heinous offence against another than to fall in love with the same woman ? O, by my soul, it is the most unpardonable breach of friendship.

It is the same when they are on the field :

Would you choose to be pickled and sent home ?—or would it be the same to you to lie here in the Abbey ? I 'm told there is very snug lying in the Abbey.

Sir Lucius would ask himself the same question if he were in Acres' shoes. It takes an Irishman to invent an Irishman who

has no humour and who yet brings down the house. And it is a true mark of comedy that none of the characters, except the two Absolutes, should ever see the joke of one another, not to say of themselves. Even Sir Anthony is serious when he declares that the unknown bride shall, if he so chooses, have a hump on each shoulder. So far, he is but an excellent parody of the immemorial old bullying father. But he is thoroughly alive, and enjoys his son's tricks perfectly once they are found out. The diction again, of Mrs. Malaprop, like her name, has become part of the language, though she was by no means the first mistress of the ornate style. It is perhaps due to the sounding-board of the theatre, and to the footlights, that she has overshadowed Smollett's Tabitha Bramble, whose 'epitaphs' are almost as 'nicely deranged,' as well as other precursors. Her mistakes are not overdone ; they come thickly when she is moved ; but she goes on talking safe English for some little time, and then slips—for choice in a single syllable : 'no caparisons, Miss, if you please.' In the same way Acres, and the gloomy Fag, and David are stock figures reanimated.

Faulkland is the despair of the actor, and the reader likes to hurry over him ; but he is not the least interesting figure in the *Rivals*. In 1775 the speech of sensibility was still rife in serious comedy, and Sheridan is 'taking it off.' Cumberland, who was afterwards to suffer in the *Critic*, abounds in Faulkland-talk. But considered as mimicry, the style, so long forgotten, now falls flat :

> The mutual tear that steals down the cheek of parting lovers is a compact, that no smile shall live there till they meet again.

Yet we must remember that the letters (and presumably the talk) of eighteenth-century courtship were much more ceremonious and literary than in a later day ; and to Sheridan's audience Faulkland would not seem wholly preposterous. Moreover, he is intended to be a genuine human being, and not merely a parody of one, nor again merely an absurd one. And was Sheridan himself not infected, for the moment, by the hectic style ? I have never been sure. At any rate, he is trying to fit it to a real person who demands our pity. Faulkland suffers ; he suffers foolishly, but still not without dignity ; and foolish suffering is one of the worst kinds of all. Julia, manifestly speaking for Sheridan, describes her lover in phrases that would not surprise us in the analytical Marivaux :

> He expects every thought and emotion of his mistress to move in unison with his.—Yet, though his pride calls for this full return, his

humility makes him undervalue those qualities in him, which should entitle him to it ; *and not feeling why he should be loved to the degree he wishes, he still suspects that he is not loved enough.*

Sheridan himself, less than two years before, had been married after his long courtship, which was marked not only by a famous adventure but by many clashes of sentiment with Miss Linley. It may not be too far-fetched to fancy that he knew, and now could not unkindly mock, some of Faulkland's moods. The character is his half-serious tribute to the *un*comic strain in the contemporary *drama*. It must be granted that on the modern stage Faulkland and Julia are detrimental ; and I am only trying to account for them. With or without them, the *Rivals*, by common consent, is one of the freshest comedies in English. The action positively dances along, and the story is innocent of any purpose. It is lighter-hearted, by a great deal, than the indignant *School for Scandal*, and gives a simpler sort of pleasure. The rounded cadence of Sheridan's periods is already heard in the *Rivals*. The very valet talks rhythmically, and in classical figure ; but we do not mind the incongruity :

> Why, then, the cause of all this is Love,—Love, Thomas, who (as you may get read to you) has been a masquerader ever since the days of Jupiter.

Rhythm is a quality that keeps all these comedies alive, and the hearer awake, and it is of much importance in the theatre. It is present even in such a scrambling little farce as *St. Patrick's Day*, which is somewhat blunt in its humours but still goes with a rush. We can scan even the homelier prose, accent by accent, with satisfaction :

> *Mrs. Bridget.* No, give me a husband that knows where his limbs are, though he want the use of them ;—and if he should take you with him, to sleep in a baggage-cart, and stroll about the camp like a gipsy, with a knapsack and two children at your back ; then, by way of entertainment in the evening, to make a party with the sergeant's wife to drink bohea tea, and play at all-fours on a drumhead :—'tis a precious life, to be sure !

The double disguise of the scheming lieutenant, first as honest Humphrey Hum, and then as the German quack doctor, is a device of a kind as old as Garrick's *Irish Widow*. Sheridan tossed off *St. Patrick's Day* ; but he took much more pains over the *Duenna*, which is an excursion from his usual line of comedy.

VIII

The best commentary on this admirable piece, which is less often read or played than its companions, is General Burgoyne's subsequent preface, already mentioned, to his own *Lord of the Manor*. Sheridan's nominal scene is Spain ; but he is actually writing a true ' English Opera,' in which, as Burgoyne was to lay down, the songs, while abundant, are subordinate to the story and part of it. The *Duenna* is thus not a musical or ballad farce in which the action is a mere tissue, but a play of light and harmless intrigue with pauses for the singers. It yields to none of Sheridan's plays in airy young gaiety or ingenuity of pattern. The ditties are real ' Irish melodies ' of their kind, with the requisite touch of true feeling behind their apparent ease. Some are of acknowledged grace and beauty : the *Duenna* contains ' Had I a heart for falsehood framed,' and ' I ne'er could any lustre see.' In one poem there is a measure with a familiar ring :

> The crimson dawn bids hence the night ;
> Unveil those beauteous eyes, my fair ;
> For till the morn of Love is there,
> I feel no day, I own no light.

This play may well have lost favour owing to a certain crudeness, which is now out of date, in the subject. We do not set upon the stage an ugly old Jew who is caught in marriage by the trick of an ugly old lady. Our vulgarities are different. Sheridan can be vulgar in his own way ; and he may have learnt his drastic style of portraiture from Congreve. Lady Wishfort's diction comes to mind as we listen to the duenna retorting the taunts of Isaac, who is now her husband and undeceived. He had supposed the disguised lady to be the lovely daughter of the house. Margaret describes Isaac to his face :

> a body that seems to owe all its consequence to dropsy ! a pair of eyes like two dead beetles in a wad of brown dough ! a beard like an artichoke . . .

Our skilful revivers of the *Way of the World* have also presented the *Duenna*. The dialogue of the lovers with the old father (pale follower though he be of Sir Anthony) goes with a merry spin, and a quickness of riposte, which Sheridan seldom bettered. And the graceless little scene with the toping divines and Father Paul opens a vein of jesting which he did not pursue

further. It reminds us of some pages of Beckford, where he finds himself among the jovial Spanish clergy. Sheridan here adapts his memories of Falstaff, whose maker, we may think, would have relished the dialogue :

Paul. Alas, my appearance is deceitful. Bloated I am, indeed ! for fasting is a windy recreation, and it hath swollen me like a bladder.

Don Ant. But thou hast a good fresh colour in thy face, father : rosy, i' faith !

Paul. Yes, I have blushed for mankind, till the hue of my shame is as fixed as their vices.

Isaac. Good man !

Paul. And I have laboured, too, but to what purpose ? they continue to sin under my very nose.

Isaac. Efecks, father, I should have guessed as much, for your nose seems to be put to the blush more than any other part of your face.

Paul. Go, you 're a wag.

In this play, as elsewhere, Sheridan is never afraid of letting his personages talk out of character. He lets us hear his own voice, and trusts to his wit to carry everything off. The *Spanish* young lady says, of the Jew who has been six months a convert, that he

stands like a dead wall between church and synagogue, or like the blank leaves between the Old and the New Testament.

If we know Sheridan's manner, we could almost detect him by that one sentence.

The *School for Scandal* consists of two plays, or rather of two themes carefully sewn together. The story of the Teazles would make a play by itself ; but then there would be no background, and no feeling that the Blatant Beast, or a herd of such beasts, is waiting to leap out and devour the scandal. The ' school,' on the other hand, would not make a play by itself, unless something happened to set its tongues to work. Besides, its personages, even Mrs. Candour, are hardly persons at all, but types, or even labels ; although, clamouring all together, they may be fancifully thought to make one many-headed creature. Moore, in his *Memoir*, discusses at length the evolution and manipulation of the two themes. If unity be wanted there is the unity of atmosphere. The Teazles and Surfaces move in an air which is thick with detraction. Native to that air is Joseph, who unites the two portions of the comedy. And these are admirably joined when the scandal-mongers, in the very frenzy

of a concoction which deludes themselves, kill off Sir Peter in the imaginary duel; and when Crabtree, the realist of the party, knows exactly what happened to Sir Peter's bullet:

> what is very extraordinary, the ball struck against a little bronze Pliny that stood over the fireplace, grazed out of the window at a right angle, and wounded the postman, who was just coming to the door with a double letter from Northamptonshire.

The double letter clinches the story; it must be true, and presently the dead Sir Peter walks in. Thus the *School for Scandal*, even when read, makes a single impression; and in the theatre no jar is noticed at all.

This is the only play of Sheridan's with a moral purpose, and so far it reminds us of Ben Jonson. There is no mistaking his generous wrath. The *Ode to Scandal*,[1] of which he is probably the author, an unequal piece in mixed lyrical measures, shows his preoccupation with the subject. His life in the theatre gave him ample material. He sets out to scotch a particular snake, and takes care not to lose his temper in the process. Indeed he has two purposes; besides ridiculing scandal, he desires to show up 'sentiment.' He does it, we must confess, in a somewhat coarse, if very telling style. His Joseph Surface has become a name; but he is too bad to convince us. Joseph never made any one angry, any more than Pecksniff or Stiggins. He is purely comic, and goes off little humbled and merely rather at a loss. Charles, to whom Joseph is the foil, is more real, and is also, perhaps for that reason, less satisfactory. Sentiment re-enters by a back door in the presentment of Charles. Sir Oliver is meant to be applauded for his indulgence to the youth. 'He would not sell my picture.' No; but we are sure (if we think about it, which we do not) that he will make ducks and drakes of the legacy, Maria or no Maria. He is a cheerful, cheap sort of young fellow. All might be well if we were not so visibly bidden to admire him. Much, of course, depends on the actor, whose true line might be to make Charles a purely comic and fanciful figure like his brother. The Teazles are on a different level of art. The lady is the last and most pleasing in the long gallery of town dames who, like Congreve's Millamant, 'hate the country and all that relates to it.' She has no harm in her, bating some extravagance, and has abundance of honesty: a real portrait of a charming irritated woman. Sir Peter is the growling husband of tradition, again thoroughly requickened in Sheridan's way.

IX

Sheridan's knack of verbal coinage, in which he excels all our dramatists since Congreve, comes out strongly in the *Critic*. The 'puff preliminary,' and Lord Burleigh's nod, and the Spanish fleet invisible because it is not yet in sight, are jests that still pass current. As we have seen, high-wrought tragedy was rife in 1779, and was to continue long. It is remembered, if at all, chiefly by the *Critic*, which is so good that it must always outlive its occasion. Also it must have revived some attention, however faint, to the already extinct heroic play of the older kind. Sheridan had this in mind as well as the works of his own day; and so far, the *Critic* is like an epitaph made as an afterthought upon some queer dead personage who is only a tradition. But, even for the scholar, it is not a burlesque upon any drama in particular. It is not based, like Fielding's *Tom Thumb*, on a methodical study of examples. It is the Pure Idea of burlesque, and speaks not only to literary persons but to schoolboys; the author is here a schoolboy of genius himself. The jokes are like the old jokes of an old friend, all the better for being expected; and we applaud them before they begin.

Puff. You see I have them all at a deadlock. The ladies can't stab Whiskerandos—he durst not strike them, for fear of their uncles—the uncles durst not kill him because of their nieces—and every one of them is afraid to let go first.

Sneer. Why, then, they must stand there for ever.

Puff. So they would, if I hadn't a good contrivance for 't.

The history of the English parody play is well enough known. It goes back through Fielding and Carey to the *Rehearsal*, and thence to the *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, another small masterpiece that is still proving its vitality. There are hints, too, and antecedents, in Ancient Pistol and in Hamlet's tragedy of Gonzago. The parody comes up in every age as the natural protest of humour and good sense. Overblown tragedy that goes beyond nature is apt to appear either at the outset or near the close of a rich period of production; in Thomas Kyd, or in Nathaniel Lee. In Sheridan's time nothing was left of the turbid power which redeems those writers; there was nothing that he could be fairly charged with failing to revere. It is plain, though, from one passage, where he is speaking of comedy, that he is thinking of domestic tragedy, or at least of very serious *drame*; and these were the recent forms to which Sneer is referring:

. . . replete with wit and mirth, yet of a most serious moral! You see it is called *The Reformed House-Breaker*; where, by the mere force of humour, house-breaking is put in so ridiculous a light, that if the piece has its proper run, I have no doubt but that bolts and bars will be entirely useless by the end of the season.

Dangle. Egad, this is new indeed!

Sneer. Yes: it is written by a particular friend of mine, who has discovered that the follies and foibles of society are subjects unworthy the notice of the comic muse, who should be taught to stoop only to the greater vices and blacker crimes of humanity,—gibbeting capital offences in five acts, and pillorying petty larcenies in two.

But this is only in conversation; the 'tragedy rehearsed' is not that kind of play at all. Sneer is evidently speaking here for Sheridan; but in another sentence Sheridan is laughing at Sneer, and also at Dangle. For the critic remarks that

the theatre, in proper hands, might certainly be made the school of morality; but now, I am sorry to say it, people seem to go there principally for their entertainment.

This is what Sheridan, at least at the moment, wishes them to do. And Dangle regrets, while Sheridan does not, that there is

no *double-entendre*, no smart innuendo admitted; even Vanbrugh and Congreve obliged to undergo a bungling alteration.

Sheridan, in *A Trip to Scarborough*, had 'altered' the *Relapse* of Vanbrugh; cutting it down, purging away some cloacal scenes and passages, keeping most of the wit, adding a very little of his own, and being careful not to disfeature the original Lord Foppington. Such changes measure the increase in decorum since the onset of Jeremy Collier.

As in the *Rehearsal* and the *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, and in *Hamlet* too, the remarks of the audience and the author are part of the story. In the *Critic* this setting, with the preliminary scenes, bulks larger than the tragedy itself. Sheridan has here more than one axe to grind. The fretfulness of Cumberland as Sir Fretful is proved, unfortunately, by other witnesses. Such is the unfairness of literature, that Cumberland, for all his gifts, is chiefly thus remembered—or forgotten. 'Grandpapa,' probably says the modern young person at the play, 'were you saying that Sir Fretful was *meant* for somebody?' Sheridan's other attacks are less personal. The carping critic, and the fussy patron of the stage, are not extinct; nor, though his methods are changed, is Mr. Puff. He is, however, somewhat prolix, and many of the allusions fall flat. The best character in this group is Mrs. Dangle, who keeps aloof

from broils, owns that Sir Fretful is rather a favourite of hers 'because everybody abuses him,' and vainly tries to make Dangle see himself as he is. It must be admitted that when she tells him he is called 'a theatrical quidnunc, and a mock Maecenas to second-hand authors,' she is talking pure Sheridan.

X

'From me,' says Mr. Puff of his fellow-puffers, 'they learned to inlay their phraseology with variegated chips of exotic metaphor.' Much of Sheridan's own phraseology may be thus described; and where did he learn the knack of inlaying? From the old comedy, no doubt; but chiefly, after all, from himself. He took all possible pains to get the exact shape and glaze that he wanted, and to fit the piece into the mosaic. The early drafts of the *Rivals* and the *School for Scandal* show something of the process. Many a sentence stands out high and sharp, and to our later eyes bizarre, upon the general shining pattern. Reading it aloud, we stop with a kind of protest to say, 'That can only be Sheridan; no one else would say it; his character, in the play, is not really saying it; and it *dates* Sheridan.' Not that we mind; and would that any one now could say things so pleasing, and so fantastic! So—

Careless. For now, instead of the social spirit of raillery that used to mantle over a glass of bright Burgundy, their conversation is become just like the Spa-water they drink, which has all the pertness and flatulency of champagne, without its spirit or flavour.

Or Mrs. Dangle:

Yes, my drawing room is an absolute register office for candidate actors, and poets without character.—Then to be continually alarmed with misses and ma'ams piping hysteric changes on Juliets and Dorindas, Pollys and Ophelias; and the very furniture trembling at the probationary starts and unprovoked rants of would-be Richards and Hamlets!

It must have cost much pains to work up all that. The manner was not a happy legacy for the theatre. Artificial dialogue continues through the nineteenth century down to the time of Thomas William Robertson and afterwards; with the result that we cannot read it, and turn back to Sheridan. It is not equally present in all his plays, or in all parts of the same play. The points and conceits come more thickly in the *Rivals* than in the *Duenna*. The members of the scandal club, like Sneer and Puff in the *Critic*, are professional traders in fireworks, and

bring them ready to let off; while the talk of Charles Surface and his friends, like that of Mrs. Dangle, is more in nature. One of Sheridan's hall-marks is the cold hard-wrought simile, which the actor must seem to deliver as though he had just thought of it. This, perhaps, is a legacy from Congreve; it recalls the old character-writers and wit-mongers. In a note which has been preserved, Sheridan jots down fourteen comparisons for a 'long lean man'—

with all his limbs rambling—no way to reduce him to compass unless you could double him like a pocket-rule . . .—when his wife is by he follows like a note of admiration—see them together, one is a mast and the other all hulk . . .—to sing her praise you should choose a rondeau, and to celebrate him you must write all alexandrines.

In the same way, his characters talk in periods. Sheridan was an orator, and an Irish orator; and besides, rhetoric and studious cadence were all around him. The *Decline and Fall* began to appear in 1776, between the *Rivals* and the *School for Scandal*. His own great speeches were yet to come; but his comedies show something of the same orotund habit:

Wounded myself, in the early part of my life, by the envenomed tongue of slander, I confess I have since known no pleasure equal to the reducing others to the level of my own injured reputation.

This, perhaps, did not sound so impossible in an age of elaborate speech and letter-writing; and at any rate, if we are to have Sheridan at all, we must, and easily can, resolve to enjoy all his quips, and similes, and antitheses, and sonorities. How the style may degenerate, can be seen in his surprising *Pizarro*, produced long afterwards, in 1799, and very freely adapted from Kotzebue's *Die Spanier in Peru*. In this tragedy, of which it is fairest to say very little, the sentimental and ranting prose is for ever dropping into blank verse; and the whole play, though imported, oddly recalls the excesses of our own heroic drama, a century earlier.

Sheridan wrote a good many verses besides the songs in the *Duenna* and 'Here 's to the maiden of bashful fifteen.' They have never been collected, and their canon is not fully ascertained. But of those that are certainly his, the best are in the heroic measure. The generous lines (1779) *To the Memory of Garrick* have nothing of the finish of Sheridan's prose, but they show how the old cadence, so nobly adapted for eulogy, still survived:

Harmonious speech, whose pure and liquid tone
Gives verse a music, scarce confessed its own:

This, and the player's look and gesture, are 'all perishable,' unlike the bequest of the poet and sculptor :—to that common theme Sheridan, who had seen the great performers, gives a new gloss.

The epilogue to the *Rivals* has a touch of Goldsmith's tenderness, with its pictures of the soldier and the 'wandering tar' thinking of their Nancys and Susans at home ; and the *Portrait*, addressed to 'Amoret,' namely Mrs. Frances Crewe, is a delicately turned compliment. The *Ridotto of Bath* (1771) is a mere following of Anstey ; and the Hudibrastic lines of *Clio's Protest*, which is credited to Sheridan, contain little that is good except the familiar and pretty passage, 'Marked you her eyes of rosy hue ?' But the *Verses addressed to Laura* (namely Miss Ogle, who was afterwards to be his second wife) are highly finished, and full of his generosity of soul. They are on her lover who had been killed in war :

> Unknown to me the object of her grief ;
> I dare not counsel, did I ask relief . . .

There are many witnesses to the transporting effect of Sheridan's oratory, which Macaulay does not exaggerate. His speeches[1] are often extant only in the third person, or in summaries, or in differing versions, and are hard to judge as literature. The opening address against Hastings (February 7, 1787) and the 'Begum speech' (June 6, 1788) are the most famous examples, and we can just, with an effort, fancy ourselves the hearers. The former of these we have in an abstract, the second in an edited copy of a literal shorthand report. Sheridan's power of marshalling his facts, his sympathy with the oppressed, his passionate conviction, and his dramatic skill, are all apparent. Much of the matter is hard forensic or parliamentary argument, lightened by sarcasm and witty flourishes. It must be owned that some of the high-wrought passages are painfully exclamatory and polysyllabic, and remind us of nothing so much as of *Pizarro*. They have not the weight of intellect behind them that is latent even in Burke's most furious sallies. The art of the orator, save in the highest instances, shares the fate of that of the actor ; and Sheridan, as a master of prose, is to be judged by his dramas, where he is safe.

CHAPTER XI

TRAGEDY

I

The general decline of tragedy [1] was hardly less marked than the failure of the epic. Production was copious enough, and the stage records show what a horde of plays now long dead, and often born dead, were played and printed, and how the public appetite for tragedy would not be denied. It was greatly sharpened by the genius of Garrick, who could carry off almost anything. He made his name, during the first two years (1741-1742) of his triumphal course, by his Richard the Third, his Lear, and his Hamlet. He played Otway's Pierre and Rowe's Lothario; his Macbeth, his Othello, and his Hotspur soon followed. Garrick could afford some risks, and showed much kindness to the serious drama of his own day. From goodwill, he produced his friend Johnson's *Irene* (1749); and no work of Johnson's, frigid though it might be, could want for brains. But Garrick also brought out Glover's *Boadicia* (1753), which prates much and coldly of honour and virtue and turns the British queen into a foolish virago; the stiff *Creusa* (1754) of William Whitehead the laureate, based on the *Ion* of Euripides; and the flat *Virginia* (1754) of Miss Burney's friend, Samuel Crisp. Also, at various dates, the *Barbarossa* and the *Athelstan* of John Brown (the author of the *Estimate*), as well as plays by John Home and by Henry Brooke, had their chance from the 'English Roscius.' Without dragging the reader through too many such pieces, I may try to define the weaknesses of tragedy, to give its chronicle in outline, to cite some of the better examples, and to note the valiant effort made by Lillo and others to put life into a dying craft.

II

The true language of poetic drama was now forgotten, or rather misremembered. Shakespeare, indeed, was always there; and, thanks chiefly to Garrick, he was more in vogue on

the eighteenth-century stage than any other writer. He was honoured on all hands above all other dramatists; but we find fewer tributes to his poetry and his supremacy of speech. After Rowe, and until the time of Coleridge, there is little direct effort to imitate his manner, except by humorous forgers like the youthful Ireland (*Vortigern*, 1796). The favourite models for tragic diction were more recent. There was the heroic drama of Dryden and his fellows. But the style of the *Conquest of Granada*, at its best a truly noble one, none but Dryden could command; and it was scarcely his fault, or that of Nathaniel Lee, that their chief bequest to tragedy was a strain of unreal diction. There was also Otway, whose *Venice Preserved* was long to hold the theatre, and whose piercing appeal to the sense of chivalry and pity encouraged many a copyist. Yet Otway, for all his intensity and pathos, is anything but a good writer. He 'failed to polish or refine.' 'But, for the passions, Southerne sure and Rowe.' This line of Pope's, printed in 1737, when Southerne was still living, and when Rowe, though long dead, still kept his prestige, brings us nearer to the prevailing models. Pope is speaking, not for himself, but for the conventional critic of his day. *Oroonoko*, and still more the *Fair Penitent* and *Jane Shore*, are full of a high-pitched appeal to the 'passions.' To Rowe in particular, and to his effect on the tragedy of sentiment, I must return; nor, probably, would sentimental comedy have been the same but for his influence. Lastly, there was the 'classical' drama of the French type, with its more abstract and restrained language, its cult of the unities and of that 'decorum' which discouraged bloodshed on the stage, and its avoidance of the mixed species of tragi-comedy. From *Cato* (1713) onwards to *Irene* (1749), and afterwards also, these observances ruled, more or less, in many a tragedy. They were somewhat loosened by the practice of Voltaire,[1] who was much translated and adapted for our stage, and who was by far the most popular of foreign dramatists. All these models and types told upon English tragedy in various degree and complex fashion. They often cross and intermix; and I do not profess to thread the maze, but only to cite some of the tragedies that may still be perused with goodwill.

Most of them were in verse; and the versification, it must be added, was no better off than the diction. Dryden, on the occasions when he quitted rhyme, had written the only blank verse to be called remarkable. The epic line of Milton, which kept alive the sense of rhythmical grandeur in so many of the poets, could not help the playwrights. Their measures show a

melancholy lack of ear ; their lines do not ripple, and are little varied or interwoven ; and end, too often, with that painful creaking of the brakes, which is probably due to the memory of the rhymed heroic couplet. Home, in his *Douglas*, is a partial exception, and has a thin but real music. Yet such defects of form are but the sign and not the cause of ' that within which passeth show,' the sterility of the tragic sense.

III

Some of the roots of this failure may lie outside the bounds of literature. Much might be said of the unheroic temper of the time, of the ignobleness of public life under Walpole and his supplanters, and of the flatness of the court even in the day of Caroline. Yet there were great and moving events that might well have spoken to the imagination. The death of Wolfe, and the Forty-Five, and the making of India, were themes indeed. But the graver passions found their voice in the oratory of Chatham and Burke, and not upon the stage. We hear, in Thomson or Glover, echoes of the liberal and patriot feeling of a group ; but it is a literary affair, with many allusions to the Greeks and Romans. The weakness was, on the whole, artistic ; and if tragedy was uninspired, it was her own fault, and not that of the world without. She leaned to two extremes : either she suffered from pernicious anaemia, and argued coldly and dialectically, in the manner of *Cato* ; or she tended to rave and weep, in the manner of the *Revenge* and the *Fair Penitent*. In each case the result was distant from life, and the characters were too seldom of this world.

Henry Mackenzie, in the *Life* of John Home, which he read out in 1812 to the Royal Society of Edinburgh, recalls the decline of tragedy in the time of George the Second and mentions the models that were then admired. Some of them belonged to the former age. The name of Otway, he says, had ' long been coupled with that of Shakespeare ' ; then ' next in rank were placed Rowe and Southerne,' along with Congreve and his *Mourning Bride*. There was also, of course, Addison's *Cato*. After these, and between 1720 and 1760, came Young's *Revenge*, Edward Moore's *Gamester*, the ' family tragedies ' of Lillo, and Home's *Douglas*. This is a fair and representative list, and includes most of the pieces that can interest us now. That ' spiritual east wind,' which Matthew Arnold fancied was a blight on the mind of Gray, but which, in the field of poetry at

large, was in truth only the uncertain breath of spring, had certainly descended here.

The year 1730 is of no special significance in the record of poetic tragedy. There is little break in method or temper with the time of George the First. The models and conventions remain, for a while, much the same. A true departure was indeed made in 1731, by Lillo with his *Barnwell*; but, as will appear, he too had his predecessors. His effort to bring the drama back to the passions of actual and humble life was of great historical import, represented a step forward, and will for clearness be described separately; but it arrived early, and it did not overthrow the accepted types of play. All the species went on reproducing themselves side by side; and the older ones, which date back to the Revolution, were to die very stubbornly. In giving some instances of these, we may begin with two indubitable poets, Young and Thomson, who are remembered for quite other work, and who persisted in supposing that their talent was dramatic.

IV

In his ambitious, strident tragedies, Young[1] is for ever stumbling into poetry, and then all too quickly out of it again. Often it is the poetry of the *Night Thoughts*, and not dramatic at all; it is sententious and aims at magnificence:

> The days of life are sisters: all alike,
> None just the same; which serves to fool us on
> Through blasted hopes, with change of fallacy:
> While joy is like tomorrow, still to come;
> Nor ends the fruitless chase, but in the grave.

This is from *The Brothers*; and in the same play the distracted Philip of Macedon, as he listens to music, completes our picture of Melancholy as she was conceived in the time of George the Second:

> How vain all outward efforts to supply
> The soul with joy! the noontide sun is dark,
> And music discord, when the heart is low:
> Avert its omen! what a damp hangs on me!
> These sprightly, tuneful airs but skim along
> The surface of my soul, not enter there:
> She does not dance to this enchanting sound.
> How, like a broken instrument, beneath
> The skilful touch, my joyless heart lies dead!
> Nor answers to the master's hand divine.

Sometimes Young has an overture that almost reminds us of Marlowe :

> This ancient city, Memphis the renowned,
> Almost coeval with the Sun himself,
> And boasting strength scarce sooner to decay,
> How wanton sits she amid Nature's smiles. . . .
> (*Busiris.*)

Young's plays show much energy of mind, and some skill in construction, and they are full of a semblance of passion. But the result is ashes in the mouth ; the suspense is unrelieved and overdone, and everywhere feelings natural in themselves are pushed to a uniform extreme, owing to an uneasy awareness in the writer that he is unable to watch their true gradations.

Still, these three tragedies are of interest if only for their variety of experiment. *Busiris, King of Egypt* (1719) is an effort to escape from the ' classical ' fetters and go back to the Elizabethans. Busiris is a kind of Claudius, his queen Myris a kind of Gertrude-Goneril, and Memnon the prince is a kind of Hamlet who tears a passion to tatters. In *The Revenge* (1721) Young draws on many predecessors, but definitely challenges Shakespeare. His Zanga is a rhetorical Iago, and in the end is led off talking ; but we prefer the *closure* : ' From this time forth I never will speak word.' Yet Zanga invents quite as good a plot as Iago. He is a captive, and his conqueror, Don Alonzo, has struck him, and he nurses his vengeance. To Alonzo, who is a very foolish Othello, he slanders Leonora, Alonzo's wife, and casts suspicion on Don Carlos, Alonzo's friend and confidant. This he can do because Don Carlos, whilst a prisoner abroad, has deputed Alonzo to woo Leonora on his behalf, with the conventional result. These two love another, and there is a conflict of loyalties and generosities in all three hearts. Here is the best and most original part of the play. But Carlos has sacrificed himself to his friend, and Leonora is Alonzo's wife. Zanga, by sundry tricks, awakens fatal suspicions in Alonzo. Carlos is murdered, Leonora slays herself, and Alonzo does the like. Zanga then shocks us by suddenly repenting, and by remarking ineffably,

> And art thou dead ? so is my enmity ;
> I war not with the dust ;

and by adding that ' to receive me, hell blows all her fires.' No doubt ; but it is the one-day-to-be-reverend author who is speaking, and not the villain.

The Brothers, which Young drafted early in life, forbore to put on the stage on the ground that he was presently to be ordained, and published with changes in 1753, is not, like its precursors, inspired by our old drama. It is a close adaptation of a classical piece, the *Persée et Démétrius* of Thomas Corneille. These are brothers, and sons of the fifth Philip of Macedon. They are rivals for the succession, and also for the love of Erixene. Perseus, the villain, forges a charge of treason against the good Demetrius, gets him into prison, and cheats him of his bride. Demetrius kills himself just when his father's eyes have been opened to the truth. *The Brothers* begins well, and with a promising restraint of language, but flares out in rant and interjections. It leaves, like all that Young wrote, the impression of genius which has somehow gone wrong. It is built (thanks chiefly to Thomas Corneille) with care, and the menace of the oncoming Roman power is skilfully kept in sight.

The age of Pope had produced several other spirited melodramas of a historical or pseudo-historical kind. *The Siege of Damascus* [1] (1720), by John Hughes, the friend of Addison and the editor of Spenser, was justly praised by Johnson and by Gibbon; but both of them regret that the story should have been emasculated. How Hughes did this, may be seen from one of the most splendid narratives in the *Decline and Fall* (ch. li.). In deference to 'the foolish delicacy of the players' he was led, says Gibbon, to 'soften the guilt' of the renegade Damascene, who in the play is called Phocyas, and to lead both him and his mistress to a 'frigid catastrophe.' But here, and also in the *Mariamne* (1723) of Elijah Fenton, one of Pope's translators of the *Odyssey*, there are dying gleams of the older poetry and its heroic passions. The play finishes in rant and absurdity; but the deadly fray of factions at the court of Herod, with his sister Salome and the criminal minister Sohemus ranged against the queen, is presented with keen theatrical sense. Nor is the *Timoleon* (1730) of Benjamin Martyn to be despised. It relates the life of the hero at Corinth, and not his more illustrious doings in Sicily. Timoleon 'burns with Liberty and love,' and wavers long, for the sake of his queen, before he will crush his brother Timophanes the tyrant. At last he 'throws his mantle over his face while the others despatch' the miscreant. The magnanimity of Timoleon, who has previously forgiven his brother, falls rather flat; and Timophanes is the more interesting of the two. But there are touches of pathos in this prentice play, described in the prologue as a 'first-born.' Dinarchus, a victim of the king, cries out,

I 'll in, and pray. Consider, gods, I 'm old,
Old, old, and weak. I am unfit to bear.
Lay me down gently in mortality,
Forgetting and forgot.

V

Thomson's five plays were all produced after the *Seasons*. They rest, it is to be feared, in much the same limbo as his *Liberty* and his *Britannia* ; and they often leave us wondering that he still had it in him to write the *Castle of Indolence*. Yet they have poetic, if little dramatic, interest ; the fire is by no means dead. *Sophonisba* (1730) is avowedly a Racinian drama ; and the preface states the rules of symmetry as clearly as anything in English : the subject is

one, regular, and uniform ; not charged with a multiplicity of incidents, and yet affording several revolutions of fortune : by which the passions may be excited, varied, and driven to their full tumult of emotion.

The passions, unluckily, are cooled by the high politics of Sophonisba, who gravely argues with her husband Syphax that it is for the good of Carthage that she should marry his captor Masinissa. Thomson, in his preface, is careful to say that ' by the laws of Rome and of Carthage, the captivity of the husband dissolved the marriage of course.' And the queen announces :

All love but that of Carthage I despise.
I formerly to Masinissa thee
Preferred not, nor to thee now Masinissa ;
But Carthage to you both.

The amiable soul of Thomson lacked heat to animate the scenes in which Masinissa sends the queen poison and is then in despair upon finding that she has taken it. Unlike the turgid but really impassioned *Sophonisba* of Nathaniel Lee, the piece is cold ; and the cold does not, like that in Milton's Hell, ' perform the effect of fire.' In *Agamemnon* (1738) there is much more poetry, and some scenery :

But straight, as evening fell, the fluttering gale
Encreasing gradual from the red north-east,
Blew stiff and fierce.

But Thomson was rash enough to disfigure the heroine of Aeschylus. Egisthus is all too prominent, and in an immense speech persuades the *wavering* Clytemnestra to her crime. A

timid Judith would be equally startling. And the classical canon, that blood may only be spilt in the wings, is half-defied ; for

the noise of Agamemnon's assassination is heard indistinctly and at a distance behind the scenes . . . the noise heard distinctly and nearer.

Thomson's Cassandra, although she is capable of saying

O heavens and earth ! you shock me to distraction !

can still talk poetry to the Chorus :

Chor. O the yellow banks
Of far Scamander, in whose silver stream
We used to bathe, beneath the secret shade !
Cass. O cheerful Ida's airy summits, where
The Gods delight to dwell !
Chor. O silent Troy,
Whose seats have often echoed with our song !

The most pleasing of Thomson's dramas, *Edward and Eleonora*, is not a tragedy but a historical tragi-comedy. It was banned from the stage for political reasons, and printed in 1739. The features of Frederick Prince of Wales, endowed with a halo, were too clearly visible in those of the noble Edward, destined to deliver his country from corruption. Thomson, as we know, was a fervent supporter of the Opposition. But there is also a breath of romance and chivalry in *Edward and Eleonora*. It has been compared with the *Talisman* ; and the likeness is plain, though probably an accident ; Scott does not mention it amongst his sources. There is the English prince crusading before Jaffa ; and the gallant sultan, Selim, who comes disguised as a dervish, partly to clear himself of the charge of having hired a ruffian to poison the king, and partly to cure Eleonora. She has sucked the wound and risked her life ; but Selim reveals himself, and produces her in perfect health.

Thomson's most telling and popular tragedy, *Tancred and Sigismunda* (1745), had a long life on the boards and was translated into French and German ; but it now seems a rhetorical and pseudo-passionate affair. It is adapted from a romance inserted in *Gil Blas* (book iv. ch. iv.), and has at any rate a dramatic plot, too intricate to describe at length. Tancred, another ' patriot king ' in the making, is tricked by the tortuous Siffredi, the father of his ladylove Sigismunda, into accepting, along with the throne of Sicily, a bride, Constantia,

who never comes upon the stage. Siffredi also forces, or beguiles, Sigismunda into a marriage with his own accomplice Osmond. We may fancy what Ford, or even Shirley, might have made of the scene in which Tancred passionately urges Sigismunda to flee with him, learns too late that she is a wife, and is interrupted by Osmond. Blood flows; Tancred kills Osmond, who has stabbed Sigismunda mortally; and Tancred is left lamenting. Thomson's verse here approaches to poetry, and the episode is stirring even in the level prose of Lesage. After this, Thomson's *Coriolanus* hardly needs a mention. But in the masque *Alfred* [1] (1740), which he wrote with David Mallet, another note is often heard:

> What time the glow-worm through the dewy path
> First shot his twinkling flame.

Here is also the first version of *Rule, Britannia*, which is now fully credited to Thomson. A poem by courtesy, it lives, like many an excellent hymn, by its rhythm and setting. Of the masque itself enough to say that it presents Alfred first chased by the Danes, and then beating them; receiving good advice from a hermit; and hearing a band of aerial spirits chant the future glories of England.

VI

> And truly, to bring sorrow to a crisis,
> Mad folks, and murdered babes, are shrewd devices.

Such is the just remark of Shenstone in the epilogue to the *Cleone* (1758) of his friend Robert Dodsley. It was the custom thus to make game of a tragedy [2] when the curtain had fallen; but for *Cleone* such a device is now superfluous. It was produced and printed with something of a flourish. There is a befitting motto, *praecipe lugubres Cantus, Melpomene*; an ode to that Muse; a dedication to Chesterfield; and a preface, where the author tells how Mr. Pope had advised that the original three acts should be swelled into five, and how an 'imperfect hint' had been taken from the legend of St. Genevieve. The 1759 edition has a frontispiece, in which the dying Cleone appears in a wooden-jointed posture and very tightly laced. Cleone is the wife of the general Sifroy, in whose absence the villainous Glanville vainly tries to win her. Then he slanders her to Sifroy, naming the young Paulet (a blameless Cassio) as the culprit. Sifroy, who is very foolish, believes, and Cleone is cast forth with her child. The latter is killed by Glanville's

agent Ragozin ; and Cleone dies distraught, after Sifroy has recognised her innocence. An absurd production : but there are glimmerings or memories of the older poetry, in which we know Dodsley was well versed ; Cleone laments over her dead child :

> 'Tis fast asleep—well thought : I 'll steal away,
> Now while he slumbers ;—pick wild berries for him,
> And bring a little water in my hand—
> Then, when he wakes, we 'll seat us on the bank,
> And sing all night.

Such a strain is rare enough in 1758 to deserve quotation. But there is always that fatally comic and summary way of operating on which Sheridan fixed unerringly in the *Critic*. Isabella, the creature of Glanville, says to him, speaking of Sifroy :

> Suppose him dead, doth he not leave an heir,
> An infant son, that will prevent thy claim ?
> *Glan.* That bar were easily removed ;

and he sends Ragozin to his work. Dodsley did better, as we have seen, in his little humorous sketches.

As already noticed, about the middle of the century there was an epidemic, encouraged by Garrick, of classical and historical tragedies ; and the species lasted throughout this period. An early specimen, and by no means the worst, is the *Athelwold* (1731) of the versatile Aaron Hill,[1] who successfully adapted so many plays of Voltaire. Athelwold, the trusted warrior of King Edward, has secretly married an unknown lady, with whom the king has fallen in love at the first glance, and whom Edgar has sent him to inspect. The treachery is sure to be discovered ; and Athelwold has also to face a deserted mistress, Ethelinda. All comes out ; and in the end Athelwold, finding Ethelinda dead, leaps over a cliff with her body. There is a vigorous scene in which the two women face each other. The same theme, more feebly handled, is found in Mason's *Elfrida* (printed 1752). Here the king affects, as a *king*, to pardon Athelwold, and then challenges him as ' man to man,' to the destruction of both. Mason's *Caractacus* (printed 1759) is a worse play ; but both pieces are classically built, with a regular chorus. The odes are imitative of Gray, who, though critical, was all too kind to his admirer. Another type is seen in William Whitehead's *Roman Father* (1750), based on Corneille's *Horace*. A better name would be the *Roman Sister* ; for the interest centres on Horatia, whose brother, in the famous combat of the trios, kills her lover Curiatius, and who exclaims in despair,

'Curse on my country!' and 'spurns the impious passion' of patriotism. Also there are the historical plays, already noted, of Henry Brooke. From all these it is a gentle descent to the *Percy*[1] (1777) of Hannah More; and to the *Braganza* (1775) of Robert Jephson:[2] a piece approved by Horace Walpole, whose *Otranto* Jephson was to dramatise in his *Count of Narbonne* (1781). Walpole's own tragedy, the *Mysterious Mother*, as we have seen (Ch. II.), stands apart in virtue of its subject; yet it is part of the same industry, and shows the desire rather than the capacity to strike the chord of terror. These are only a few examples chosen from a crowd. Poetic tragedy of this kind was to linger on for another generation; and in the age of Byron, Talfourd, and Joanna Baillie it was still rife. In the age of Tennyson it just kept the stage, somewhat on sufferance; when will it come again?

Thus history and legend had been ransacked for heroes: Agamemnon, Creusa, Agis, Cato, Barbarossa, Demetrius, Tancred. But all the time there had been a current of protest, and efforts had been made to find tragedy in ordinary, or at least in real, life. Why not show humble heroines in distress, and decent or wicked gentry? and why not let them talk in their own idiom? Prentices, too, and returned sailors, and procuresses and thieves. There were homely, actual persons all the time alive upon the comic stage; it only remained to place them in tragic situations. They were actors or sufferers in many a true story that was dramatic as it stood; the records were in the *Newgate Calendar* and in the journals and memoirs of the time. This was a natural demand; and the 'domestic,' or 'bourgeois,' tragedy that resulted had a varied pedigree. There was, first of all, the elder drama. Lillo we find adapting *Arden of Feversham*; and *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, with its ruined and brutal gambler, seems to have been known to the author of *The Fatal Extravagance*. But this had never been more than a minor form of tragedy; and it had almost gone under, until the time of the present revival. Lillo and Moore also had other and later models. When they wrote, there was nothing new in the choice of middle-class characters, in the mixture of bloodshed and moralising, or in the incessant appeals to the passion of pity. These are not the only features of domestic tragedy. To complete the outline, there is also to be remembered the general atmosphere, associated with the use of prose, of squalid real life; as well as the crude use of the conception of destiny which defeats all strugglers in the snare. Still, the species can

hardly be understood without reverting to the most noted tragic dramatist of the last age, Nicholas Rowe.

VII

He, the first editor of Shakespeare and the translator of Lucan, had lived till 1718. His *Fair Penitent* (1703) and his *Tragedy of Jane Shore* (1714) remained stock pieces for about a century. Rowe is one of the authors who tempt us to ask whether the simpler feelings of mankind are really, as is pretended, always the same ; for why, where thousands once wept, and that for several generations, should nobody weep now ? To recover confidence, we must go higher, to *Othello* or *King John* ; yet even so the question is not answered. It is, perhaps, greatly a matter of style, and of all that style means ; for a whole age, if it has lost the instinct for seeing, and expecting, the greatest language, may readily, and completely, and dreadfully, be taken in by the conscientious copy of it. Rowe, for all that, is not to be slighted. He has real feeling for a story, and his style is purer and more engaging than that of his fellows and successors. He has an undeniable sense of the theatre. His dramas are somewhere on the way to reality ; and the prologue to the *Fair Penitent* [1] clearly prophesies many of the aims of domestic tragedy :

> Long has the fate of kings and empires been
> The common business of the tragick scene,
> As though misfortune made the throne her seat,
> And none could be unhappy, but the great. . . .
> But far remote, and in a higher sphere,
> We ne'er can pity what we ne'er can share. . . .
> Therefore an humbler theme our author chose,
> A melancholy tale of private woes ;
> No princes here lost royalty bemoan,
> But you shall meet with sorrows like your own. . . .
> Who writes, should still let Nature be his care,
> Mix shades with light, and not paint all things fair,
> But shew you men and women as they are.

In this play, which alters its original, Massinger's *Fatal Dowry*, almost out of knowledge, the emphasis is laid on the piteous struggle in the mind of a woman. Calista, the victim of Lothario, and the betrothed of the unknowing Altamont, is torn between remorse, loyalty, and a still divided love, and dies after her lover has found out the truth and killed her betrayer. This is depicted with an expansive poetic eloquence that is almost poetry ; and the persons, while they have romantic names, are

not patricians. The plot is feeble, but is carried off by the most vivid figure in the scene. Lothario is a rather mean descendant of Don Juan, but a worthy ancestor of Lovelace ; and his name is in the English dictionaries. In *Jane Shore*, ' written in imitation of Shakespeare's style,' the pathos, though sadly overstrained, is truer than in the *Fair Penitent*. Jane herself is of humble stock ; her Edward is dead, and her pittance depends upon Gloster. She will not lend herself to his plot against the princes, and is turned adrift. And she is tricked by her rival, Alicia, into innocently laying an information against Hastings, whom both of them love. But Hastings basely insults her, and Jane, under these accumulated wrongs, sinks and dies. Rowe's poetry, probably, was none the worse for his avowed ' imitation of Shakespeare,' if we can forget Shakespeare. But it was by lowering towards prose, rather than by heightening, the pitch of the language, that the ' domestic drama ' was to gain. Rowe, none the less, is one of the founders, or revivers, of the species. So, if in a slighter way, is Thomas Southerne, whose *Oroonoko*, (1696), with its noble coloured man talking in lucid blank verse, and its not less noble and tear-moving Imoinda, set a further precedent for what Rowe himself baptized as the '*she*-tragedy.'

The only hope for the art lay in a threefold change. Tragedy must speak to more simple and natural feelings ; it must transfer the scene to the known world, the world of every day and of the novel ; and it must be in prose. All those attempts were made, though not all at once, or at the same time, or by the same writers ; and the old styles went on by the side of the new. Nor did any masterpiece, either great or little, result. But we are thankful for the signs of real passion and observation. The most remarkable experiments of this kind were made by John Home, George Lillo, and Edward Moore. Home, who claims notice first, while keeping to verse and to the poetic scene, tried to use the ' language of the heart ' in a simple way. Lillo and Moore took stories from familiar life, and told them in a kind of prose. Lillo is the most important playwright of the three, and the strongest, and a genuine pioneer.

VIII

John Home [1] (1722-1808) was one of the Northern Lights, and belonged to the circle of Alexander Carlyle, Hugh Blair, Robertson, and Hume. He resigned from the ministry of Athelstaneford, in East Lothian, when the Kirk rose up in wrath at the spectacle of a clergyman writing for the stage. His

fellow-ministers who went to see his play were punished. *Douglas* had been declined by Garrick, but it was played with great applause, first in Edinburgh in 1756, and in the following year at Covent Garden. *Agis* was written earlier, but produced later; and Home's other pieces, *The Siege of Aquileia* (1760), *The Fatal Discovery* (1769), and *Alonzo* (1773), were staged with varying success. The worst, *Alfred*, was damned in 1778; and in his latter years Home spent much time on an historical sketch, which is not without interest, of the rebellion of 1745. We hear of him as a vainish, simple-minded, absent-minded person, inclined to tell long stories about himself; but as amiable, sociable, and good-natured. His devotion to Hume is in his favour; he travelled far in order to accompany Hume on his last journey southward in search of health. The tragedian and the philosopher played piquet upon the road; and every evening Home took down the *obiter dicta* dropt by his companion during the day. Hume, who knew his end was near, jested with Home even in his will. He bequeathed to him, besides much claret, one bottle of 'that other liquor called port,' which Home 'held in abhorrence,' and added:

> I also leave to him six dozen of port, provided that he attests under his hand, signed John *Hume*, that he has himself alone finished that bottle at two sittings. By this concession, he will at once terminate the only two differences that ever arose between us concerning temporal matters.

The other 'difference' concerned the spelling, common in Scotland, of the name *Home* as *Hume*, a practice repudiated by the owner.

These traits hardly prepare us for the exalted strain of Home's tragic muse. His *Agis* is inspired by Plutarch; and he always sought to represent, we hear, persons of 'chivalrous valour and romantic generosity.' *The Siege of Aquileia* has a genuine dramatic theme. The consul Emilius has to choose between the sacrifice of his sons, who are prisoners of the blood-thirsty Maximin, and his loyalty to Rome. They will be murdered if he does not yield the city before it is relieved by Gordianus. Despite his wife's entreaties, he does not waver, and in the end loses one of his sons, who dies heroically. We can imagine how Massinger or Fletcher might have treated the story. Home, though he aims at a purer manner than his fellows, and is transparent enough in his language and the conduct of his plot, has not the force for such a subject. But his sentiment caught the popular ear. *Douglas*, suggested by

the ballad of *Gil Morrice*, proved—though not immediately—to be the greatest success in the serious drama since *Cato*. The story befits a ballad, and though Home presents it with vehement feeling it is hardly tragic. The disaster is founded less on character than on an error of fact. The lost son, Douglas, is recognised by his mother, Lady Randolph, and they meet privately; but her present husband, Lord Randolph, mistakes their relationship, and, egged on by a curiously Byronic villain, Glenalvon, commissions Glenalvon to murder Douglas. Lady Randolph kills herself, and Douglas contrives, at the last, to make an end of Glenalvon. Such is the bare story; the execution is somewhat infantine; but this play probably represents the high-water mark of poetic tragedy in the middle of the eighteenth century. It is forgotten, except for the address of Norval, which for aught I know may still be heard in our schools; but some respect, in this instance, is due to the dead—the more so that Home's verse escapes the flushed and strained style of his contemporaries, and is not without a hint of modulation:

> Once, on the cold and winter-shaded side
> Of a bleak hill, mischance had rooted me,
> Never to thrive, child of another soil;
> Transplanted now to the gay sunny vale,
> Like the green thorn of May, my fortune flowers.

Home was a friend of James Macpherson, prompted him to reveal *The Death of Oscar*, his first venture, encouraged him to scour the Highlands for Gaelic poems, and believed stubbornly in the authenticity of 'Ossian.' *The Fatal Discovery*, originally called *Rivine*, seems to have been vaguely suggested by *Othona*, and Macpherson's iambic prose, like his thin cold mist of imagery, easily finds its way into the verse of Home:

> Thy father's steps
> Turn to his hall no more; deaf is mine ear
> For ever to the voice of youth and joy.
> Orellan's lonely cave shall hide my grief.
> There will we dwell together, and decay
> Like two old trees, whose roots hang uppermost
> On some bare mountain's side. . . .

The play, indeed, may be described as watery, or as of a species that was over-ripe for parody. The 'fatal discovery' is that made by Rivine that her husband Durstan has won her by fraud from her true lover Ronan, who is thought to be dead. But of course he is not; he appears, and there is a conflict in the heart

of Rivine. Durstan seizes his wife, and is challenged by Ronan, who bids him 'quit thy prey and guard thyself.' But Durstan 'holds Rivine with one hand and draws his sword with the other,' saying: 'Halt! if thou dost advance One step, Rivine on the motion dies'—a kind of deadlock, which Sheridan perhaps remembered in the *Critic*. Here it is solved by Rivine stabbing herself; the others fight and fall. Nevertheless, there is everywhere in Home a kind of faint false dawn of poetry.

IX

Lillo, though he was to popularise the newer form, was not the first in the field. An early example is seen in *The Fatal Extravagance*[1] (1721) of Aaron Hill. The word *fatal* often recurs in the titles of these works, and they harp on the idea of inevitable circumstance. But it easily becomes undramatic, and passes into its very opposite—that of mere chance disaster. In either case the victim is helpless. *The Fatal Extravagance* does not want for horrors. Bellmour, the ruined spendthrift, kills his merciless creditor Bargrave in duel; stabs, in despair, his own sister, who is prepared to submit to Bargrave if he will cancel the family debts; poisons himself; and only just fails to poison his wife and children. Unluckily Hill uses a swollen blank verse for his story; and, as the Elizabethans knew, if verse is used at all, it should be of the bare literal order, with a viperish hiss in it, like that of *A Yorkshire Tragedy*.

But prose is best; and prose is used, not only in *George Barnwell*, but in a noticeable little piece which appeared after *Barnwell* but which seems to be independently inspired. Long before Richardson related the trials of Clarissa in the house of iniquity, the theme had attracted a minor playwright of all work, Charles Johnson. He is not to be confused with the Samuel Johnson who was known for *Hurlothrumbo* and other extravaganzas. Charles Johnson's *Caelia, or the Perjured Lover* (1732) was ill received at Drury Lane on account of its most graphic scenes. They are laid in one of those establishments at the doors of which, Balzac tells us, 'God has placed a shudder,' and the proprietress, Mrs. Lupine, will bear comparison with the hostess of Clarissa. Her visitors of either sex may be called Hogarthian. Some of her talk is not unquotable. She is speaking to Mr. Wronglove, the 'perjured lover' who has brought Caelia under this roof for her confinement. He is but a pocket Lovelace; yet his language is quite as spontaneous as that of his successor. The usual inmates are playing truant:

Wronglove. Poor Caelia—she clings round a man like an evil conscience. She is so fond, and loving, and tender, and true, and breeding ; and I am so cold, yawning, and indifferent, and sick, and surfeited.

Mrs. L. Here am I, labouring honestly in my vocation, wasting my health, spending my spirits, consuming my vigour and my vitals, and bringing home fresh goods for the market every day ; while these jades, these lazy jades, are carousing and merrymaking, I warrant, by themselves, or along with some beggarly Tipperary toupets, that they are in love with, forsooth ! The idle hussies ! What will *become of them when their poor mother is in Paradise* ?

Caelia, when she discovers where she is, exclaims, in a phrase we might expect from Thomas Middleton,

> What are these things, that take the form of women ? . . . There can be no such place—there can be no such women.

The constables sweep her off to the bridewell with the rest. There she dies, just able to see her father, who comes to forgive her. She has heard that Wronglove now means to marry a lady. He, however, is killed in duel by an indignant champion, Bellamy. Johnson describes himself in the prologue as an ' unfashionable windmill-fighting fool ' :

> Behold her sunk beneath a lover's scorn ;
> And violated truth and beauty mourn.

And Fielding, in a somewhat coarsely-worded but sympathetic epilogue, notes how an ordinary author, a mere ' town-bard,' would have shirked the tragedy, spared the life of Caelia, and righted her by marriage to the devoted Bellamy.

X

In *The London Merchant, or the History of George Barnwell* (1731), the foundation is an old hawker's ballad ; and the language of this is perfectly fitted to its hearers, and is really better than Lillo's [1] prose, which is for ever toppling into blank verse :

> ' O pardon me,' quoth I,
> ' Fair mistress, I you pray ;
> For why, out of my master's house
> So long I dare not stay.'
>
> ' Alas, good sir,' she said,
> ' Are you so strictly ty'd,
> You may not with your dearest friend
> One hour or two abide ? '

So speaks the siren Millwood to the still virtuous Barnwell, whom she will presently persuade to rob his master's money-bags; but in the play this becomes:

Millwood. Yet do not, do not leave me! I wish my sex's pride would meet your scorn;—but when I look upon you,—when I behold those eyes,—Oh! spare my tongue, and let my blushes speak. —This flood of tears to that will force their way, and declare—what woman's modesty should hide.

Not that *George Barnwell* is wholly in this vein. It was not for nothing that Fielding respected Lillo, and praised him even to excess, and coupled him as a moralist with Hogarth. Lillo, despite his hybrid style and his habit of shouting his sermon, was a craftsman of a new kind. When his villains are left alone together, or are off their guard, they can talk plain powerful English, well in character. Millwood has prompted Barnwell to murder his uncle—an incredible proceeding, which is enacted with much rhetoric. But when Barnwell, in his remorse, fails to bring the gold and jewels for which the deed was done, then Millwood, in anger and in order to save her skin, turns traitor and exclaims:

Fetch me an officer, and seize this villain; he has confessed himself a murderer. Should I let him escape, I might *justly* be thought as bad as he.

That *justly* is truly dramatic; but Lillo is seldom subtle. He has the instinct of the melodramatist who is also a popular preacher; every point must go home at once to the slowest person in the audience. Hence the success and the long lease of his play, which was sometimes performed even at the end of the nineteenth century, and was much translated and adapted. Barnwell became a type, or proverb; and Millwood is a creation. She is alive; and when she is brought to bay she hits hard. Lillo was not always the conventional moralist of his day:

I found it therefore necessary to be rich; and, to that end, I summoned all my arts. You call 'em wicked; be it so! They were such as my conversation with your sex had furnished me withal. . . . I hate you all; I know you, and expect no mercy. Nay, I ask for none; I have done nothing that I am sorry for; I followed my inclinations, and that the best of you does every day.

Faced with the gallows, Barnwell makes a tearful and stagey ending. He repents, and is embraced in prison by the virtuous Maria, who has loved him long. But Millwood is tougher. She

has not quite lost her religious belief, but she has lost hope, and ends in a defiant strain :

I would not live,—nor die ! That I could cease to be, or ne'er had been !

These may be crude effects ; but such a note of rebellion and desperation is not often heard in the year 1731 ; nor is it easy to find afterwards in the great novelists. Millwood, I think, is more real than Lovelace, whose ravings are excogitated rather than natural. Actual tales,[1] with somewhat similar *dramatis personae*, are on record.

Not much is known of George Lillo (1693-1739), except that he was of Flemish extraction on the father's side ; that he did well in the City as a jeweller and left some money ; that he was well liked for his mild temper, good-nature, and modesty, as well as for his ' strict morals ' ; and that he was

in person, lusty, but not tall ; and of a pleasing aspect, though unhappily deprived of the sight of one eye.

He produced in all eight plays or entertainments, of which only *Barnwell* and *Fatal Curiosity* are rememberable. *Silvia, or the Country Burial* (1730) is a miserable thing, a pastoral opera sprinkled with doggerel songs, and a singularly rank production for a professional moralist. Two other plays are adaptations, of the old unscrupulous kind, from the Elizabethan drama. *Arden of Feversham* (1759) is revived, with changes for the worse ; but the enterprise shows that Lillo knew of his dramatic forbears. *Marina* (1738) is a vamping-up of portions of *Pericles* ; and there is enough of Shakespeare left, and mangled, to disturb our memories of the most exquisite ' recognition-scene ' in the world. Lillo, however, was only sinning along with his age when he committed such atrocities. He also wrote two ambitious and unrefreshing tragedies, *Elmerick* (1740), and *The Christian Hero* (1735). This last is a heroic play, of the type that was not soon to disappear, on a subject often favoured by the tragedians of the day, the revolt of Scanderbeg against the sultan Amurath.

Fatal Curiosity (1736) is much more striking, and shows the revolt in theatrical taste. The blank verse has a prosaic energy ; and there is a strain of passionate reality in the language, which marks an advance upon *Barnwell*. The play was admired by Fielding, whose prologue (also prosaic) shows the affinities between the new drama and the coming fiction. For *Pamela* was still unwritten, and Lillo's experiments could owe nothing to the

great novelists. His plays are not of the same tribe as Fielding's; but we are not surprised to hear the author of the *Miser* and of *Tom Thumb* exclaiming,

> No fustian hero rages here tonight;
> No armies fall, to fix a tyrant's right;
> From lower life we draw our scene's distress—
> Let not your equals move your pity less!

Fatal Curiosity, though written at high pressure, has a theme that will hardly bear the weight of tragedy. The disaster is due to a mere mistake. The 'curiosity' is twofold. First and chiefly, it is that of Young Wilmot, who comes home after many years to his parents, an unrecognised stranger. He has a casket of riches, and is curious to see how the old people will receive him, and will rejoice at the 'surprise' when he reveals himself. But they, too, are curious about the casket; and in order to get it, his desperate demoralised old father kills Young Wilmot (the mother, like Lady Macbeth, offering to do the deed); and then, on learning the truth, stabs himself. The tale is good enough for a rough ballad, and in fact came out of an old Jacobean tract. George Colman the younger, when the play was revived in 1782, hailed it as 'wrought by true English genius' and as drawn 'from British annals.'

XI

Another example of the same species[1] is the naïf but disarming little play by Thomas Cooke, *The Mournful Nuptials* (1739), which in its later form (1743) was entitled *Love the Cause and Cure of Grief, or the Innocent Murderer*. It is in fact two playlets tacked together. The first is a country idyl of true love which after some opposition is blessed by the parents. Young Freeman, the son of a genial gentleman, has secretly married Charlotte, the daughter of Farmer Briar, who is at law with Old Freeman. Then Old Freeman's wife insults the lowborn Briar; who rages, and wishes to part the couple, but is appeased by his own wife. Then comes the 'innocent murder,' for which Cooke says that he 'took the hint from an old legal story.' Briar is found dead in a field; and Old Freeman's bloodstained staff exactly fits the hole in Briar's head. He is tried, and in danger; but behold, one Weldon, who had been arbitrator in the quarrel between the two elders, and who is on the jury, nobly jumps up and explains that *he* had done the deed, though innocently. He had met Briar, who reviled him; and then—

The unhappy man, impatient of rebuke,
Struck on my temples with an oaken staff;
Amidst my rage, the stick I wrested from him,
And, smarting with the blow, drove at his side;
When suddenly he fell, and with a groan
Cried, 'I've deserved my death,' and spoke no more.
Astonished at the blood which flowed from him,
I viewed the staff; at the small end of which
Was a sharp iron spike, which had before
Escaped my eye [*sic*].

Old Freeman, it appears, had come by, found the body, and in confusion had taken up the staff, which was like his own. The judge (who is easily satisfied) accepts this true account at once, and all ends well. The handiwork may be rudimentary; but the language is of the right kind for this sort of tale, and we do not stop reading. It is a relief after the staple diction of the *Boadicias* and *Braganzas*.

The most sombre and ambitious tragedy of this school was *The Gamester* (1753) of Edward Moore [1] (1712-1757), the fabulist and essayist. This play is full of crudities, but there is true passionate stuff in it. It is a dramatic tract, which like *Barnwell* exhibits a downward 'progress' of the Hogarthian kind. The aim is to dramatise and scarify the darling vice of the town. In Moore's *Gil Blas* (1751) the Spanish valet who has been to England relates:

We had a passport to all the people of rank.
Gil Blas. And what was that?
Melchior. Play, my boy,—the key to every great man's door in England. Do but play deep, and you rank with the best of them.

Moore's play was doubtless the most powerful sermon preached against gambling; to see how deep was the passion, we need only open the letters of Selwyn or Horace Walpole. The part of Beverley the gamester was played by Garrick; he is an unresisting creature, much tormented and in the end wrecked. The stage is held by the villain Stukeley and his band of assassins, who in the end turn upon their master. Stukeley is like one of the monsters of the older drama. In this period 'the villain,' as one critic [2] says, 'is the most constant reminder of Elizabethan tragedy.' He also has some eighteenth-century traits; Stukeley is a Mandevillian man, preaching the code admired by Miss Matthews in *Amelia*:

Fools are the natural prey of knaves; nature designed them so, when she made lambs for wolves. The laws that fear and policy have framed, nature disclaims; she knows but two, and those are

force and cunning. The nobler law is force; but then there 's danger in 't; while cunning, like a skilful miner, works safely and unseen.

Moore's prose, like that of *Barnwell*, is for ever lapsing into this kind of blank measure; but there is a strength about it which is not altogether spurious. The story is unrelieved. Stukeley is in Beverley's confidence; leads him to lose money; makes love, though vainly, to his good wife; plots to have the virtuous Lewson murdered, and to throw the guilt on Beverley; and is only foiled when his own ruffians revolt, and Lewson turns up alive. But just too late, for Beverley has poisoned himself in prison, and dies in the arms of his wife, who has come to release him. This *too-lateness*, which causes the catastrophe, and is in the nature of an accident, is a common and mechanical device of Georgian tragedy. It seems to turn upon the toss of a coin whether the play shall really be a tragedy, or a tragi-comedy after all. But in the theatre this flaw is not noticed. The *Gamester* left its mark and had its influence; and Thomas Holcroft's *Road to Ruin* (1792) is a moral tragi-comedy not yet wholly forgotten.

Moore, however, was a sharp observer, with no little knowledge of the world, or at least of the town, both on its frivolous and on its seamy side. His essays in the *World* (see Ch. IV.). are more neatly written, and less overcharged, than his plays. Some of them, indeed, are sentimental comedies in miniature. I have mentioned already (p. 94) the situation of the patient wife, who keeps her head, visits her husband's mistress, and receives him back. All parties, at the conclusion, are surprisingly of one mind. There are many tales, of more sombre cast, of the tricks by which innocent girls are misled. In one of them, the betrayer contrives an arrest, poses as the rescuer, and takes advantage. To take the taste out, there is another picture, an idyl, of a happy country parson and his wife, who have no story at all; they live on the produce of the glebe, and in their plot is a 'sand-walk between a double row of flowering shrubs, hardly ever out of blossom.' But, again, there is a 'credulous clergyman,' a kind of precursor of Dr. Primrose, who falls among sharpers and bad women and is harried with derision by them all. The influence of the novel, and of the 'witty and ingenious author of *Tom Jones*,' is seen in these papers. Moore professes to use the weapon of irony, and not to 'philosophise the world into morality': a programme which perhaps he owes to the same 'ingenious author'; although, in truth, he finds the weapon somewhat cumbrous.

One more play, the *Eugenia* (1752) of Philip Francis, the translator of Horace, may find a place here, as a type and a curiosity. It is not a tragedy, for the ending is fortunate and the wicked are baffled. But it is in verse, and in the high style, and there is no humour. The passions concerned are serious, and the personages have literary names. *Eugenia*, which is based on the *Cénie* of Mme de Graffigny, might serve as a parody of its own species; and I take leave now and then to quote preposterous things, when they are a sign of the times. Garrick was the villain, Mercour; and it gives the measure of his power that Drury Lane should have let a certain situation pass. For this Mercour coolly proposes to his victim, the gentle Æmilia, that he shall marry the rich Eugenia, and then, after 'a few days,' elope with her money *and* with Æmilia:

> This morn I mean to ask her of her father;
> And if he, easy man, should grant her me,
> With that unmeasureable wealth, his age
> Has long amassed; when a few days are spent
> In the cold duties of the nuptial bed,
> We 'll fly, Æmilia, to some distant realm;
> Enjoy each other; be a present wonder,
> And leave to future times a bright example
> Of *constancy in love.*

The sequel is in keeping. Enough that a mysterious couple prove to be Eugenia's unknown parents; and that Mercour is thus thwarted in the plot that he had formed to terrorise the lady by a forged letter showing that she had been a substituted child. She marries the good Clerval; and exit Mercour, not indeed slain, but disconcerted. Yet Francis had translated the *Ars Poetica*, with its reasonable counsels; and *Eugenia* was commended by that difficult judge, Lord Chesterfield. He tells us how, at first, it 'affected the heart so much, that it triumphed over habit and prejudice. All the women cried, and all the men were moved.' It 'pleased most people of good taste.' But there were not enough horrors for the gallery; 'the sentiments were too delicate to move them'; and the play was dropped.

CHAPTER XII

FOLLOWERS OF POPE, MILTON, AND SPENSER

I

The wealth and variety of our eighteenth-century poetry [1] have of late years been better understood. The byways are still being explored; the masters, Pope and Gray, Collins and Chatterton, are more closely studied than ever; and the quality of the treasure, once disparaged, now requires no champion. If there is some risk of overestimating it, time will soon right the balance; as Butler says, in the motto upon the title-page of this work,

> Bringing things to light, alone and of itself, is of no manner of use, any otherwise than as entertainment or diversion.

Many such things, if 'brought to light,' fall to dust when the ashes meet the air; but the devotees who recover them have given them one more chance of survival. This is true more especially of the mass of long-buried lyrics, or brief poems, which are now being reprinted. Also there is much eager re-reading, re-editing, and re-valuing of the secondary poets whose names were in all the histories, who were always perfectly accessible, and who were seldom opened. The process will take some time; it is like that of cleaning old untended portraits in a gallery, to show what they are like, and what they are worth. Falconer, Armstrong, and Cunningham are figures of this kind. There is certainly a disposition to view the poetry of that age without prejudice, and as a living whole (1928).

It is still hard, for more than one reason, to see it in a true perspective. We are tempted to judge it, not in its own right, or by its own aims and ideals, but in the light of what came after it; and to think it of value just in so far as it leads up to something not itself. We look to it for premonitions of what seem to be, and what doubtless are, things of a higher order. Thomson, we find, anticipates, and perhaps influences, Wordsworth; and Pope, in his *Elegy on an Unfortunate Lady*, betrays

a ' romantic ' element. It is all true, and is a momentous fact in poetical history. There is no need to disturb this familiar and traditional judgment, or to make out that the century is ' romantic ' after all, or just as much ' romantic ' as ' classical.' There is only *pré-romantisme*, if we take a general view. There is the beginning of a transformation scene : a slow, hindered recovery of the artistic senses and of a rarer style. This great change, which penetrates also into prose, is more distinct in poetry. Many scholars have described it, and it is certain to be always in the mind of the chronicler. But he is beset by more dangers than one. He must remember that a poet is to be judged by his own purpose, not by that of another poet. This canon seems too obvious to state, but it is easy to neglect, above all in the case of a style that has long ceased to exist. Collins's *Ode to Evening*, except for a few words, is in a manner that can never be out of date. His *Ode on the Death of Thomson*, for all its sincerity, is in a manner of delicate artifice, which can never recur ; and so, in a lighter vein, is Shenstone's *Pastoral Ballad*. It is therefore harder, in these cases, to do justice. But another danger is greater ; it is the tyranny of names.

Terms like *classical* and *romantic* it is hard to do without ; but they seem now to require a rest, and they will seldom occur in these pages. Their ambiguity is well known ; and when they are contrasted it becomes much worse. *Qu'est-ce qu'un classique?* Sainte-Beuve, in his famous *causerie*, describes the pedigree of the word, and uses it, in its true and liberal sense, of any work that is very good and that is made to last. But it may also refer specially to the Greek and Roman patterns, which have shown their power to last ; or, again, more specially still, to work like Pope's *Imitations of Horace*, which reproduces one admirable, but still peculiar and limited, pattern of Augustan Rome : the *pedestris sermo*, namely, with its precision, ease, and finish. It is in this sense that we often speak of our own ' classical ' poetry ; but we do so with a suggestion that passion and grandeur are absent, and are not to be expected. Hence the word ' classical,' which ought to be catholic and inclusive, comes to be exclusive and almost slighting. Then, if we apply the label to the *Vanity of Human Wishes*, where there is no lack of passion, and where there is something very like grandeur, the slippery term recovers its reputation. ' Romantic,' it is well known, is more elusive still ; and of this there is no agreed definition. We all apply it to much the same works ; but they have so little in common (the *Gentle Shepherd*, ' Ossian,' the *Balade of Charitie*, *Songs of Experience*)

that we hardly know what we mean by it, or whether we are speaking of form, of feeling, or of subject.

Probably no one now describes the 'progress of poesy' in the eighteenth century as a simple conflict between the classical and romantic tendencies, or schools. To do this is only to get into a morass. The terms, at best, are only safe in extreme cases, such as the *Epistle to Arbuthnot* and the *Balade of Charitie*. It is still less safe to try to separate the ingredients in a particular poem. In such a case we only 'murder to dissect.' Is Gray's *Elegy*, are the *Seasons*, classical or romantic? It is idle to ask, or to pick them to pieces and distinguish. So far as the work is good, all its constituents are fused and harmonised. The ambiguity deepens when the 'classic' who is followed is Milton or Dryden. The only safe distinctions, it would appear, are two, which partially but by no means entirely coincide. One is between verse that is good, in its own legitimate order, and verse that is not; the other is between verse which bears the mark of its date (and which may yet be excellent), and that which has a more permanent stamp and would seem fresh and natural at any time. From these, of course, must be distinguished the styles of which we are now sure that they were always false, however greatly they were once admired. But I will try, after reviewing this poetry as a whole, to suggest the general impression that it leaves.

II

Pope, who died in 1744, had given his life to the art of poetry with as single a mind as Wordsworth, and with no such interruption as that which distracted, if it enriched, the genius of Milton. He had chased the right style for a whole generation, as if with the device *Italiam sequimur fugientem*, and had tried to reach perfection in every form that he practised. But wherein, we ask, did he succeed? His journey was circuitous. The 'knowing Walsh' bade him study to be 'correct,' unlike the seventeenth-century writers. He was to find a style that should serve as a standard, that would always wear, and that had the virtues of the style of Horace. And Pope obeyed the call; but he also forgot it. No such formal pattern could content the man who created the airy sylphs, or translated the speech of Sarpedon, or wrote the finale of the *Dunciad*. He attempted every species, and many styles: the gaily fantastic, the heroic, the pathetic, the descriptive, the philosophical, and the satiric. What he chiefly perfected was the verse of manners,

of satire, of vivacious dialogue, and of ironical literary criticism ; the verse that comes nearest to the best prose of the time. At intervals, and not for long, he showed his power in the poetry of fancy, in the epic style, and in rhymed exposition. But his triumph is this, that in his hands the verse of manners, dialogue, satire, and criticism, becomes poetry. This he achieved very near the beginning, and again at the end, of his career. He soon hit on the right themes and the right manner. Then he spent many days in following other and more ambitious tracks. They were often false tracks, though they helped him to master his instrument of verse. When he fully possessed that instrument, he came back to the manner that he had 'loved long since, and lost awhile,' and again achieved the perfection which he had always coveted.

In that youthful feat, the *Essay on Criticism*, he has little of his own to say ; and the poem has no unity. But he can already coin into line or couplet some proverb that will always be remembered ; and he already commands, not only the sharp contrasted rhythms of the epigram, but a surprising music and resonance in the single lines. Not even in his favourite couplet, 'Lo, where Maeotis sleeps,' does he excel the harmonies of his verse on Aristotle,

> He steered securely, and discovered far,
> Led by the light of the Maeonian star.

Yet the *Essay* is but a heap of little sparkling stones, a few of them semi-precious, and many paste. In the *Rape of the Lock* Pope manages to unite the lighter verse of manners with charm and grace, with music and colour ; the melody is like that of the silver bell that woke Belinda. He weaves a shining gossamer for his sylphs, and turns the stolen lock into a streaming constellation. He shares in the honour of keeping romance alive in the dead season ; a fragment of Iris on a dullish sky. But here he is not quite alone ; Parnell and Lady Winchelsea and, as will be seen, Dyer, support him in sundry ways. Thomas Tickell's *Kensington Garden* (1722) might not have existed but for the *Rape of the Lock* and Drayton's *Nymphidia*, but it has a pleasing grace of its own. Some of its music is as good as Pope's, and of a kind that is not heard again for many years :

> Two hundred moons in their pale course had seen
> The gay-robed fairies glitter on the green. . . .

Pope never produces the same effect again ; he never fulfils the hope that he will ring in the poetry of the future ; although,

as in his *Elegy on an Unfortunate Lady*, and sometimes in his *Homer*, he makes as though he would do so. He went on to Homer, and spent years on it which no one will say were lost. He tried gallantly to echo his original; the fire and rapidity of his version, as Matthew Arnold pointed out, are always to be prized; nor is nobility absent. Yet the worst of the *Homer* is, that not merely is it 'not Homer'; it is not really Pope. He was lured into a false manner, which was already in the air, but to which he now imparted his great authority; and it is almost too well known to illustrate:

> The infectious softness through the heroes ran;
> One universal solemn shower began;
> They bore as heroes, but they felt as man.

Can Pope have guessed that he had missed his mark? At any rate, he fell back from the heroic style upon the mock-heroic, and made the *Dunciad*. Here he is not trying to be grand and moving, but to be destructive and contemptuous; and he wastes immense pains upon the business. The poem reflects the meaner, not to say the viler, sides of his character, and I suppose that few people now enjoy it. The sham-epical style, going on so long, and exercised at the expense of insignificant and often innocent persons, becomes repulsive. But there are surprising flashes by the way and the versification has a finer barb than ever. Yet soon Pope is led astray by another bad fairy; he tries to be deep and philosophical, in the *Essay on Man*. He becomes still more pointed and resonant: at the worst, he is seeking to keep our high metaphysical poetry alive; and the *Essay* contains noble things. Lessing, like many others, exposed the incoherence of its borrowed thinking; and the poverty of the ideas often shows through the plating of the rhetoric:

> Say, will the falcon, stooping from above,
> Smit with her varying plumage, spare the dove?
> Admires the jay the insect's gilded wings?
> Or hears the hawk when Philomela sings?

To which the one and only answer can be, Presumably not. In the *Essay on Man* and its appendages, the *Moral Essays*, Pope's real strain is heard, not when he is reasoning in a grandiose fashion, as if he were a second Lucretius, but where he comes down to earth and describes men, women, and manners. This process is completed in the *Imitations of Horace*, and in their preface, the *Epistle to Arbuthnot*. Thus he ended as he had begun, as a master of the verse of raillery, characterisation, and dialogue. He came back, with many fresh resources, to the

style which he had used in describing, in 1715, the lady who is bored with her exile to the country house, and who is doomed

> To part her time 'twixt reading and bohea,
> To muse, and spill her solitary tea,
> Or o'er cold coffee trifle with the spoon,
> Count the slow clock, and dine exact at noon. . . .

Thus had Pope begun; and he ends with the character of Chloe, and with the eulogy on Swift, and with the tribute to his parents, and with 'Shut, shut the door, good John!' Above all, he has shaken off, in great measure, the blight of generalities. They were the curse of poetry in his time, for they were the wrong kind of generalities. They were not at all like those of Hamlet or of Milton's Satan, but rather of this kind:

> The arts of building from the bee receive;
> Learn of the mole to plough, the worm to weave;
> Learn of the little nautilus to sail,
> Spread the thin oar, and catch the driving gale.

The *Imitations of Horace* are well worth waiting for after so much experimentation. Pope is at last himself again; he has dropt the ambitions that were too much for him and the erroneous styles that he practised in pursuing them. All that he now wishes to say, he can easily express. He can express, amongst other things, his own pose of virtue, benevolence, and general modest superiority; and he does it perfectly, however little we may like it. But also, chameleon that he is, Pope has caught in earnest some of the humanity of his Horace. We come on it when he speaks of his friends or his parents, or of his mutton from Banstead Down. And he has resumed, now with ripened skill, the gift that he had shown in the *Essay on Criticism*, of putting shrewd literary judgments into rhyme, and of fixing, at any rate for the time, the popular voice on whatever he judges. Except Boileau, from whom he takes many a hint, no one has approached Pope in this talent, which comes out so brilliantly in the *Prologue* and in the *Epistle to Augustus*. A new kind of English verse, the verse of the *pedestris sermo*, which does the same kind of work as colloquial prose, and often does it better, is now consummately written for the first time. The model is Latin, with precedents and suggestions from the French; but the result is new. Rochester seems to have been the first to attempt the 'allusion,' or imitation of Horace; and Dryden had used the familiar style; but—not to speak of his less careful finish—Dryden's pitch is higher than Pope's, and the horn and the cymbals are

always breaking in. Pope moves on no such level, but he keeps above that of prose ; and his ' musical finesse ' is inexhaustible within the limits of his instrument. For this we can forgive, though we have to deplore, his failure to keep his early promises. He seems to have lost his feeling for visible beauty, and for poetic grace and fancy. No more sylphs for him, not even another dead pheasant with its plumage ! To write the *Dunciad*, one may well think, was enough to extinguish any such perceptions. We have to forget the poet that was lost in Pope and to cherish the poet that we have. It is impossible to imagine a time when he will not be able to give his great and peculiar pleasure.

III

There is still room for mistake as to his historical position. His authority and reputation are one thing, and the influence that he exerted upon the best writers is another. The change in poetry began during his lifetime, indeed during his prime and in his presence ; but the change in critical taste, which brought his supremacy into dispute, came later. Pope himself had no sort of quarrel with Dyer or Thomson, who, as we read them now, often seem to prefigure Cowper or Wordsworth. Neither did the public hail them as rebels to a tyrannical fashion. They simply seemed fresh original poets, who in no way contested the rule of Pope. Thomson, indeed, as will appear, used revolutionary language in a preface ; but it was little echoed at the time. The tide of opinion began to turn more clearly after the middle of the century. The *Essay on Man* had been assailed by Crousaz ; and Warburton,[1] in defending it, and in editing the works of Pope (1751), had seized the occasion to emit a dogmatic and enormous panegyric. Joseph Warton was to restore the balance. He had already, in 1746, in the preface to his *Odes*, remarked that ' the fashion of moralising in verse has been carried too far ' ; and he says in the first instalment (1756) of his *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope* :

> I revere the memory of Pope, I respect and honour his abilities ; but I do not think him at the head of his profession. In other words, in that species of poetry wherein Pope excelled, he is superior to all mankind ; I only say, that this species of poetry is not the most excellent one of the art. . . . A clear head and acute understanding are not sufficient, alone, to make a *poet* . . . the most solid observations on human life, expressed with utmost elegance and brevity, are *Morality*, and not *Poetry* ; the *Epistles* of Boileau in *rhyme* are no more poetical, than the *Characters* of La Bruyère in *prose* ; . . . it is

a creative and glowing *imagination, acer spiritus ac vis*, and that alone, that can stamp a writer with this exalted and very uncommon character, which so few possess, and which so few can properly judge.

Warton published his complete essay in 1782; and at the conclusion, after he has sat in judgment on Pope's works one by one, he comes back to his original distinction, but now in a tempered form:

Good sense and *judgment* were his characteristical excellences, rather than *fancy* and *invention*: not that the author of the *Rape of the Lock*, and *Eloisa*, can be thought to want *imagination*; but because his imagination was not his predominant talent, because he indulged it not, and because he gave not so many proofs of *this* talent as of the *other*.

And then, with a sudden turn, he argues, very soundly, that Pope is a poet who appeals to all men just because he is *not* one of the highest order:

hence, he is a writer fit for universal perusal; adapted to all ages and stations; for the old and for the young; the man of business and the scholar. . . . The great poet of *Reason*, the *first* of *ethical* authors in verse. . . . We may venture to assign him a place *next* to *Milton*, and *just* above *Dryden*.

Then, like a dominie over a prize-list, Warton wavers, remembering the 'divine music' and the 'greater genius' of Dryden; but at last, seeing that Pope is the 'better artist,' he allows the words *just above Dryden* to stand. This may be unlucky, like the phrase 'the *first* of ethical authors'; but otherwise Warton's finding is very much that of posterity, whose opinion has settled down after vibrating like a shaken compass. He was also the first man in his own time to say distinctly that 'Wit and Satire are transitory and perishable, but Nature and Passion are eternal.' Moreover his language, when he finished his *Essay* in 1782, and also in his edition of Pope's works in 1797,[1] shows that he was then defending and not merely criticising the poet, from whom the age that admired Gray and Ossian had long been falling away. Herein he is with Johnson, who in his *Life of Pope* evidently has his back to the wall, and is content to plead stoutly that Pope really is a poet. Both critics are protesting against the disposition to rule Pope out of Parnassus. Sainte-Beuve, inquiring *Qu'est-ce qu'un classique?* was to give Pope his due place on one of the ranges that are neither the highest nor the lowest, in the company of Horace. We, perhaps, may also think of him as an artist who, after much

adventuring, could say what he wished with almost more than the perfection that it deserved.

IV

> His musical finesse was such,
> So nice his ear, so delicate his touch. . . .

Cowper's familiar lines, sometimes still taken as a slight on Pope, are plainly aimed only at Pope's followers, who 'had his tune by heart.' They are, we feel, the true praise of Pope, the praise of a poet by a poet; and it has never been better said. Cowper, when he wrote these couplets, was himself one of the 'warblers,' though he was soon to study instead the tune of Milton. But his words contain a kind of contradiction. The finesse and delicacy of Pope were just what the imitators, with their 'mechanic art,' did not catch. A complaint of another sort had been heard in the lines (1762) written by Robert Lloyd:

> In these the spleen of Pope we find;
> But where the greatness of his mind?
> His numbers are their sole pretence,
> Mere strangers to his manly sense.

But Pope's influence on the poets in the generation after his death is not so easy to state precisely, for three reasons. (1) That influence is always being crossed, and sometimes overpowered, by that of Dryden; and this is apparent in some of the strongest writers. Johnson's *Vanity of Human Wishes*, and Gray's translations from Statius, and the best passages in Churchill, are all in debt to the loftier spirit and the 'long resounding pace' of the greater poet. (2) There is no rigid division between the older and the newer styles. Thomas Warton, the discoverer of old romance and the author of the *Pleasures of Melancholy*, falls at once into the 'classical' manner and metre when he writes a satire like *Newmarket* (1751). Akenside's *Epistle to Curio*, with its indignant couplets, came out in the same year (1744) as his Miltonic *Pleasures of Imagination*, and in the year before his Horatian odes. Collins's *Verses to Sir Thomas Hanmer* (1743) are, in point of form, pure Pope; and the list might easily be increased. The truth was that the struggle for survival between the so-called 'schools' was for the most part unconscious so far as it existed; and the most 'romantic' among the poets, when it suited them, used Pope's instrument without any sense of backsliding. (3) The word 'influence' is equivocal, and is sometimes a will-o'-the-wisp to the historian.

Influence on whom ? Many bad rhymers followed Pope, but they concern bibliography rather than poetry. They choke the collections of Chalmers or Park ; and often the best thing to be said of them is that Johnson was induced to write their biographies. The salvage of good verse that owes a direct inspiration to Pope or Dryden between 1730 and 1780 is not very large in bulk ; and, of course, the better the poet, the more he modifies the traditional forms. Johnson's satires have a weight of mind and a deep music that is all their own ; and so with Goldsmith's soft melody and Chaucerian felicity. Moreover, as we know, Pope put his burnish on a style and measure that was already current ; and even Dryden, though he helped to inspire, did not dictate, the music in Tickell's elegy on Addison or in Rowe's version of Lucan. The same is true of John Pomfret's modest, pleasing poem, *The Choice* (1700), which fairly earned its popularity ; and again, of Richard Savage, whose turbid and passionate strain is heard in *The Bastard* (1728). Even verses like the vivacious *Harlequin-Horace* (1731) and *Man of Taste*, by James Miller, the parson-dramatist and author of the *Humours of Oxford*, have a note of their own, though visibly and admiringly modelled upon Pope.

Still, Dryden and Pope sounded in the ears of the poets for more than a century after Dryden's death. The old ring is heard again in the *New Morality* of Canning ; and Byron, who quarrelled to little purpose with Bowles over the genius of Pope, in his *English Bards* produced a rude amalgam of the styles of Pope and Churchill. Macaulay, in his *Epitaph on a Jacobite*, was a nobler follower in the same line. Pope, indeed, went out of fashion, partly because his measure was turned to more imaginative uses by the poets from Shelley to William Morris. But should a great satirist on the events of the last twenty years still arise, will he not fall back on the methods of Pope and Dryden, the best yet discovered in our language ? Some of the writers of this lineage who flourished in the middle years of the eighteenth century, and who have some poetical personality, may now be noticed.

V

None of them, with the exception of Johnson, had more native energy than Charles Churchill [1] (1732-1764) ; but he tells us himself more than once how it ran to waste ; and Cowper, his schoolfellow at Westminster and his admirer, expresses a

regret that he was 'too proud for art, and trusting in mere force.' In his *Gotham* Churchill exclaims :

> When the mad fit comes on, I seize the pen,
> Rough as they run, the rapid thoughts set down,
> Rough as they run, discharge them on the town ;
> Hence rude unfinished brats, before their time,
> Are born into this idle world of Rhyme,
> And the poor slattern Muse is brought to bed
> 'With all her imperfections on her head.'

And again, in the *Prophecy of Famine* :

> Me, whom no Muse of heavenly birth inspires,
> No judgment tempers when rash genius fires ;
> Who boast no merit but mere knack of rhyme,
> Short gleams of sense, and satire out of time. . . .

The ruggedness of the lines bears out this confession. Churchill admired and followed Dryden rather than Pope ; and yet, unlike Dryden, he could seldom carry off his carelessness and hit the mark by instinct. Byron, in his verses on *Churchill's Grave* (1816), moralises on the vanity of renown, on 'the glory and the nothing of a name.' But this is the wrong moral ; the true and obvious one, supplied by Churchill's words, is that a poet must take special pains with his work when his wares are satire and tirade. These must be good indeed to outlive their soon dead and profoundly forgotten victims. Churchill, in the *Candidate*, gives a just and pathetic view of his own literary fortunes :

> Let one poor sprig of bay about my head
> Bloom while I live, and point me out when dead ;
> Let it (may Heaven, indulgent, grant that prayer)
> Be planted in my grave, nor wither there ;
> And when, on travel bound, some rhyming guest
> Roams through the churchyard, while his dinner's drest,
> Let it hold up this comment to his eyes,
> 'Life to the last enjoyed, here Churchill lies.'

The last line was inscribed upon his grave. His strength lies more in these stray confessions than in his gift for flaying Davies the player, or Lord Bute and the Scots, or Lord Sandwich and the Universities.

Churchill's peculiar gifts were not disclosed before his thirtieth year. He made a boyish unhappy match in the Fleet ; he took orders, and fell into debt ; he tried to eke out by teaching in a girls' school ; and also, legend says, by selling cider, or by selling pigs like Parson Trulliber.[1] Soon he found his true vein. He haunted the theatres and watched the players, and

in 1761 burst on the town with his *Rosciad*, which made more noise than any satire since the *Dunciad*. The leading actors were portrayed with a sharpness which the occasional praise only made more alarming. Churchill was now notorious, and also prosperous, and he resolved to take his pleasure. Garrick found it well to conciliate him, and the 'profession' seems to have been terrorised. Churchill dropped his cassock for secular and sumptuous attire:

> Why should I be called to account by a dull, phlegmatic —— for wearing white thread stockings, when I desire to wear white silk ones and a sword? . . . I am better qualified to be a gentleman, than a poor curate. It has been, therefore, from principle, I have shook off the old rusty gown, the bob, and the brown beaver, which sat so uneasy on me.

The *Rosciad* evoked many retorts,[1] to which Churchill rejoined with an *Apology* in the same style. He could now live by his pen; and he seems to have lived freely. He emitted verse with fatal speed, and became what Byron calls the 'meteor of an hour.' The *Prophecy of Famine, a Scots Pastoral*, reveals him in alliance with John Wilkes and the *North Briton* in the campaign against Lord Bute and his Scottish placemen. The topic gave every chance to Churchill's gift for virulent exaggeration. His honesty cannot be doubted; and his very facility and laxity of form suggest that he is sincere. He defended Wilkes at all points; and a caricature of the tribune by Hogarth elicited the frantic and unfair *Epistle to William Hogarth*. The painter's answer was a caricature of the poet as a bear. The *Poltergeist* of Cock Lane occasioned the *Ghost*, amongst whose rambling octosyllables can be found the assault on Johnson for the delay in the issue of his *Shakespeare*. Churchill's most humane and attractive poem is the *Conference* (1763), in which he confesses his remorse for a great lapse, in which a young woman had been the sufferer. In this poem he speaks from the heart and turns the lash of the censor upon himself. He went on with his cataract of rhymes. The *Duellist* contains a vivid caricature of Warburton. *Gotham* is a rambling, not unpleasant fantasy in which Churchill imagines himself the ruler of that fabled realm. In the *Times* he boldly assails, like Smollett, a vice which even the eighteenth century was chary of naming in print. The *Author*, *Candidate*, and other works, need not be recited here; but in the *Journey*, posthumously printed, Churchill speaks as a *fey* man, aware that his end is coming.

The history of his vogue is written in the bibliographies. The *Rosciad* was often reprinted separately, but more rarely as the old race of actors died out. The collected poems appeared in 1763-5, and for a decade there were new editions or reprints almost yearly; but soon they were sparser; and Churchill, though once or twice edited, has reposed little read among the 'British Poets,' a somewhat shadowy name. As for his wars, *compressa quiescunt*. But he merits an anthology; he managed, for all his looseness of form, to set his own stamp on the style that he inherited. Possibly influenced by dramatic blank verse,[1] he did something to unshackle and quicken the heroic couplet. He likes to launch on a long rhetorical period and to go on till he is out of breath; and the result, however imperfect, is free from the 'vile antithesis' and continual backward jerk which beset the measure.

Churchill's tone is always manly when he talks of himself, and not least when he is penitent. There are lines in the *Conference* with a deep reverberation, that remind us of Dryden in a similar mood. The poet fancies himself conversing with a cynical old lord, who taunts him with his weaknesses:

> spite of all you 've said,
> You 'd give your honour for a crust of bread;

but he replies:

> What proof might do, what hunger might effect,
> What famished Nature, looking with neglect
> On all she once held dear; what fear, at strife
> With fainting virtue for the means of life,
> Might make this coward flesh, in love with breath,
> Shuddering at pain, and shrinking back from death,
> In treason to my soul, descend to bear,
> Trusting to fate, I neither know nor care.

He tells how the good Samaritan, Dr. Lloyd, the father of his friend Robert the poet, had helped him when he was all but ruined; and then, when the cynic reminds him of his lapse, Churchill makes the public his confessor:

> 'Tis not the babbling of a busy world,
> Where praise and censure are at random hurled,
> Which can the meanest of my thoughts control,
> Or shake one settled purpose of my soul;
> Free and at large might their wild curses roam,
> If all, if all, alas! were well at home.

Churchill's 'characters,' such as that of Woodward the actor, or of 'Lothario' in the *Candidate*, are drawn with bitter

emphasis, and his stormy Billingsgate can still surprise us. Nor does he spare himself, as a last quotation will show ; and it will give a good idea of his masculine, by no means puny, muse :

A bear, whom, from the moment he was born,
His dam despised, and left unlicked in scorn . . .
Vast were his bones, his muscles twisted strong ;
His face was short, but broader than 'twas long ;
His features, though by nature they were large,
Contentment had contrived to overcharge,
And bury meaning, save that we might spy
Sense lowering on the penthouse of his eye ;
His arms were two twin oaks ; his legs so stout
That they might bear a Mansion-house about ;
Nor were they, look but at his body there,
Designed by Fate a much less weight to bear.
O'er a brown cassock, which had once been black,
Which hung in tatters on his brawny back,
A sight most strange and awkward to behold,
He threw a covering of green and gold . . .
. . . With such accoutrements, with such a form,
Much like a porpoise just before a storm,
Onward he rolled. . . . (*Independence.*)

VI

There are many flashes of poetry in John Langhorne, a Westmorland man and a Somersetshire parson, who is best known as the co-translator, with his brother William, of Plutarch's *Lives* (1770). Langhorne was termed by Hannah More 'harmonious Langhorne,' and told that his name would live as long as the 'adamantine hills.' Short of this, we can still admire his 'harmony,' when we read the *Wallflower* and the *Farewell Hymn to the Valley of Irwan*. Like Thomson and Akenside, he is one of the writers who show upon what stray patterns and precedents the style of Wordsworth was formed, by keeping their essential poetry and shedding their artifice or convention :

Why loves my flower, the sweetest flower
That swells the golden breast of May,
Thrown rudely o'er this ruined tower,
To waste her solitary day ?

Because, it is replied, 'Nature tells her to bestow Her honours on the lonely dead,' who lie

Where longs to fall that rifted spire,
As weary of the insulting air ;
The poet's thought, the warrior's fire,
The lover's sighs, are sleeping there.

True, personification still rules ; but Wordsworth himself by no means disdains that figure, and he inherits it from his forerunners, slight them as he may. In the lines *To the Genius of Westmorland* (also to be noted for their Tennysonian metre) it is used well :

> Oft in the depth of Winter's reign,
> As blew the bleak winds o'er the dale,
> Moaning along the distant gale,
> Has Fancy heard thy voice complain.

Langhorne practised many forms—the fable, the monody, the ballad, and the hymn—and translated fragments of Bion, of Petrarch, and of Milton's *Epitaphium Damonis* ; but his most original work of any length is the *Country Justice* (1774-7). It is written in couplets, and has its share of the traditional abstract jargon ; but there is a new spirit and movement in the verse, which is due to the refreshing influence of a new subject. The poetry of manners had been for some time escaping from Pope's literary and social world, and had shifted to the country ; —to the country, often the home of ennui for banished town ladies and broken captains ; but now also a refuge of peace and quiet, and pleasant to look at ; and, at last, a stage for the human drama, inhabited by odd characters, and also by suffering persons who are the victims of bumbledom and stupidity. The poets were slower to describe such scenes than the novelists, and they only found in Crabbe their true chronicler. Langhorne is remembered as a worthy precursor of Crabbe. He does not reach the point of telling a story, but he writes of what he knows ; and he breathes indignant compassion when he delineates the 'venal clerk,' and the 'sly, pilfering, cruel overseer,' and the greedy 'shuffling farmer,' all of whom grind down the 'poor hind, with length of years decayed.' And, cries the poet, when this victim

> Leans feebly on his once-subduing spade,
> Forgot the service of his abler days,
> His profitable toil, and honest praise,
> Shall this low wretch abridge his scanty bread,
> This slave, whose board his former labours spread ?
> When harvest's burning suns and sickening air
> From labour's unbraced hand the grasped hook tear,
> Where shall the helpless family be fed,
> That vainly languish for a father's bread ?
> See the pale mother, sunk with grief and care,
> To the proud farmer fearfully repair ;
> Soon to be sent with insolence away,
> Referred to vestries, and a distant day !

This was written after the *Deserted Village* and those roseate pictures of rural life which exasperated Crabbe to draw the scene 'as Truth will paint it, and as bards will not.' Langhorne is rough in form ; but he also reveals a more humorous side, and commands an easier manner (possibly influenced by Goldsmith) when he describes the gypsies, or the banquet in the squire's great hall :

> Here, famed for cunning, and in crimes grown old,
> Hangs his grey brush, the felon of the fold !
> Oft, as the rent-feast swells the midnight cheer,
> The maudlin farmer kens him o'er his beer,
> And tells his old, traditionary tale,
> Though known to every tenant of the vale.

It is clear that the verse of manners has ceased to be purely urban or metropolitan, and that the sting and rhetoric of the familiar couplet are being employed in a new warfare. The comedy and tragedy of the country are being observed ; satire is more generous and humane in temper, if hardly less grim in its portraiture. New scenes are opened, even while Churchill, or his enemies, continue to rail at the actors and politicians. Some verses by Soame Jenyns illustrate this change. They tell a complete story, of the kind familiar in Hogarth or Lillo ; it is the 'progress' (or rather, if the word may pass, the *degress*) of a 'modern fine lady,' who is brought low by a life of gambling and gallantries. I quote at some length, because Soame Jenyns deserves a good word for his nervous verse, and seems to be drawing from the life :

> . . . Ere long by friends, by cards, and lovers crost,
> Her fortune, health, and reputation lost :
> Her money gone, yet not a tradesman paid,
> Her fame,—yet she still damn'd to be a maid,
> Her spirits sink, her nerves are so unstrung,
> She weeps, if but a handsome thief be hung :
> By mercers, lacemen, mantua-makers press'd,
> But most for ready cash for play distress'd,
> Where can she turn ?—the 'squire must all repair,
> She condescends to listen to his prayer,
> And marries him at length in mere despair. . . .

Ruined at play again, she has to go into the country :

> . . . She bids adieu to all the well-known streets,
> And envies every cinder-wench she meets :
> And now the dreaded country first appears ;
> With sighs unfeign'd the dying noise she hears
> Of distant coaches fainter by degrees,
> Then starts and trembles at the sight of trees.

> Silent and sullen, like some captive queen,
> She 's drawn along, unwilling to be seen,
> Until at length appears the ruin'd *hall*
> Within the grass-green moat, and ivy'd wall,
> The doleful prison where for ever she,
> But not, alas ! her griefs, must buried be. . . .

At last the victim, a kind of Lady Bellaston gone to wreck, comes to a wretched end, and, so we hear, ' stings herself to death.' This narrative is as good as anything of the kind in Crabbe, who may well have known the work both of Langhorne and of Jenyns.

To show once more—what we know already from Goldsmith—that the heroic couplet and the diction associated with it are capable of a gentler mood, may be quoted a touching unsigned poem, an elegy on a child of eleven years, ' wrote by her mourning father.' It is in the April number of Fawkes and Woty's *Poetical Calendar* (1763), and concludes thus :

> When some kind angel from this world below
> Shall bring the news (for sure the angels know),
> And shall to thee and kindred spirits tell
> That mine has orders to forsake her shell,
> And be transplanted to the realms of light,
> Where faith and hope are swallowed up in sight,
> Do thou with heavenly rapture meet my ghost
> On th' utmost limits of that happy coast ;
> And thence attend me to the throne of grace,
> To view my Saviour's reconcilèd face,
> And taste the joys, ineffable and new :
> Till then, my little saint, adieu, adieu.

Here we are well away from the crowd of monodies that are touching for another reason : for, however heartfelt, they fail to shake off the numbing diction of the time. Very gradually, if surely, do ' poetic language,' and abstractions, and frigid sentences, and the dislike of calling things by a plain name, disappear from the metre in which they chiefly flourished. But the process can be seen, and suggests a further reflection.

We can hardly perceive, during the period itself, the true goal of all these scraps of narrative, cameo, dialogue, eulogy, and satire. But the goal is the tale in verse, as written by Crabbe and Wordsworth. Such experiments bear to it much the same relation as the *Coverley Papers* do to the novel. Crabbe's best stories, with their moderate length and simple evolution, and their diction which became more and more natural with time, make clear what is the true medium, and the right scale, for the poetry of real life and manners. His most finished work was done during the romantic period, after 1800 ; but he had begun

some twenty years before. The versified tragic story of humble life is now (1928) again in fashion ; but the elderly, unexcitable Crabbe, with his long-stored observation and sense of proportion, has not been excelled.

VII

Thus, as the century wears on, poetry widens its scope, and appropriates more and more of the social scene, and even passes beyond it into the solitude of nature. But man is still seldom represented in his primitive state, nakedly fighting for life against his fellows or the elements. There are signs of this theme in fiction, especially in Smollett's stories of the sea ; and, once more, verse and the novel seem to be in a state of rivalry, when we read the *Shipwreck* of William Falconer[1] (1732-1769). But we are far from the faithful and truculent descriptions of *Roderick Random*. Falconer may speak as an eye-witness and sufferer, and describe a disaster in literal detail. But he gives little picture of real life on board, or of the *dramatis personae* of the tragedy. His mariners are not Trunnions or Bowlings, but Palemons and Alberts with pathetic histories behind them. There is not much inspiration in Falconer ; but his life was an unusual and dangerous one, and he ought to have a poem written about him.

Unlike Churchill or Langhorne, he was not a man of letters by upbringing. He entered the merchant service whilst a boy ; at the age of eighteen he was wrecked off Cape Colonna in the *Britannia*, and was one of three survivors. He came home and recorded the experience in the *Shipwreck, a Poem in Three Cantos, by a Sailor*, which was published, in its first shape, in 1762. It was successful : the subject was new, and the story actual ; and, considering the history of England, there have been singularly few such chronicles in verse that are worth reading. In 1764, and again in 1769, Falconer published revised editions of his poem, in which it is twice radically transformed. He made his way into the navy, lived much at sea, and produced *An Universal Dictionary of the Marine*, which brought him professional credit. In 1769 he was lost in the frigate *Aurora*. He wrote little other verse of mark : the *Demagogue* is in the following of Churchill ; but there is also a very distinct portrait of the *Midshipman*, which shows that Falconer, had he chosen, could have made us see life between decks.

> A pigmy glass upon his toilet stands,
> Cracked o'er and o'er, by awkward, clumsy hands ;

> Chesterfield's page polite, the *Seaman's Guide*,
> A half-eat biscuit, Congreve's *Mourning Bride*,
> Bestrewed with powder, in confusion lie,
> And form a chaos to th' intruding eye.
> At length this meteor of an hour is dressed,
> And rises an Adonis from his chest:
> Cautious he treads, lest some unlucky slip
> Defiles his clothes with burgou, or with flip;
> These rocks escaped, arrives *in statu quo*;
> Bows; dines and bows; then sinks again below.

There is nothing like this in the *Shipwreck*. The subject was Homeric, but the model was Pope's *Homer*; and, whilst expatiating or declaiming, Falconer is a naïf student of Pope, whose accent he sometimes catches aptly enough:

> No lovely Helens now, with fatal charms,
> Call forth the avenging chiefs of Greece to arms.
> No fair Penelopes enchant the eye,
> For whom contending kings are proud to die.

As the doomed ship drifts past the Grecian shores, Falconer recites a sounding catalogue of classical associations. Xerxes, and Leonidas, and Aristides are remembered. The effect is rhetorical and general; and sometimes, in the rapid sweep of its obvious allusions, it can be called Byronic. Falconer is more like Crabbe or Langhorne when he comes to business, and to his catastrophe:

> As o'er the surge the stooping mainmast hung,
> Still on the rigging thirty seamen clung;
> Some, struggling, on a broken crag were cast,
> And there by oozy tangles grappled fast;
> Awhile they bore the o'erwhelming billows' rage,
> Unequal combat with their foes to rage. . . .

This is sound writing, though we must not expect much sea-music as an accompaniment. The most startling and amusing feature of Falconer's diction is his use of technical terms, suddenly poured down as though from a watering-pot:

> That task performed, they first the braces slack,
> Then to the chesstree drag the unwilling tack;
> And, while the lee clue-garnet 's lowered away,
> Taut aft the sheet they tally and belay.

And then, immediately, he slips back into what is called 'common form':

> Now to the North, from Afric's burning shore,
> A troop of porpoises their course explore;
> In curling wreaths they gambol on the tide,
> Now bound aloft, now down the billow glide. . . .

Falconer, granted this ornate manner, can describe the dolphins, or a waterspout, or a tempest, with much vigour. Like Akenside and Thomson, he took amazing pains over the text of his poem. The first version, of 1762, is the most prosaic of the three, and the most freely besprent with the phrases that were afterwards to find their proper home in the *Dictionary of Marine*. The sailors have as yet no names, and little definite histories. In 1764, in the 'new edition corrected and enlarged,' there is somewhat less dictionary, and romance begins to peer. The young Palemon, in love with the skipper's daughter, is sent on the trip by his hard-hearted father; and, though a victim of the wreck, he finds time for a long dying speech and message, committed to a friend. In 1769 comes once more 'a strict and thorough revision in the course of which,' says the author, 'he flatters himself it will be found to have received very considerable improvements.' Falconer is as good as his word: he cuts, expands, inserts, alters almost every line, on the whole for the better. He shows signs of a desire to draw character. The Rodmond, who in 1764 (where he first appeared by name) was merely a loud, obstinate sailor of the old school, becomes in 1769 a ruffian trained in a press-gang, and yet an excellent sailor:

> With skill superior glowed his daring mind,
> Through snares of death the reeling bark to guide.

And the epitaph on Palemon rises now into poetic dignity: his soul departs, and

> Resigned, she quits her comfortless abode,
> To course that long, unknown, eternal road.
> O sacred source of everlasting light!
> Conduct the weary wanderer in her flight!
> Direct her onward to that peaceful shore,
> Where peril, pain, and death are felt no more!

VIII

The authority of Pope and Dryden was by no means paramount; and it is hard to overstate the debt of poetry in this period to the older English masters. It has never been so great since. Wordsworth and Keats drew much from Milton, but in a different fashion from Young or Akenside; they had more genius of their own, and broke away further from their model. They did not depend on Milton in the same way as their precursors for the very birth and nurture of their poetry. In

neither period is there anything that for more than a moment, for a few lines at a time (as in *Hyperion*), could easily be mistaken for Milton's. It is otherwise in the case of Spenser. Some of his eighteenth century followers are actually closer to his manner and spirit than any poet in the nineteenth. The *Castle of Indolence* and some of the verses of William Thompson reproduce Spenser in a startling way, and yet are original poetry; while the *Eve of St. Agnes* fills the old stanza with a new music, and *Childe Harold* adapts its mechanism, sometimes in a magnificent fashion, to a rhetorical purpose. Of the two, Spenser, in this period, was less widely copied than Milton; but he assisted, so to speak, the poet of *Il Penseroso* in making the new verse more sensuous, and more gracious, and more humane, and lazier. In this respect the echoes of the *Faerie Queene* are a positive relief after the ambitious efforts to write in the manner of *Paradise Lost*. The two currents meet in the verse of James Thomson, who honours his debt to both of them better than all his contemporaries. In approaching him, some general features of the phenomenon may be borne in mind.

1. Milton's disciples found a public that was eager to listen to them. He was very widely read;[1] more than a hundred editions of *Paradise Lost* were published in the course of the century. But there were two Miltons, the younger and the elder. There was the Milton of *L'Allegro*, whose senses, to apply a phrase of Burke, were 'unworn and tender,' and who retained 'the soft green of the soul'; whose melancholy was a happy mood, and for whom nature was peopled by Laughter and Quiet, and by the Muses and river-gods. Even before 1740, in Dyer, Mallet, and others, his attraction[2] can be seen. Then it increased; poets like Akenside and the Wartons, Gray and Collins, were devoted to the younger Milton. But the authors of the *Seasons* and the *Night Thoughts*, of the *Chase* and the *Art of Preserving Health*, studied above all the Milton of the epics. They tried to learn his language and his harmonies, and to use them for new themes. In this way the greatest of our poetical traditions was kept alive, just when it was most wanted. It was, of course, often disfigured:

> Milton, like thunder, rolls along
> In all the majesty of song;
> While his low mimics meanly creep,
> Not quite awake, nor quite asleep;
> Or, if their thunder chance to roll,
> 'Tis thunder of the mustard-bowl.

So wrote Robert Lloyd, the friend of Churchill, when the

Miltonising poets had been long at work. To take a long course of them is like living with some worthy family that have all the same tricks of voice and gesture. The much-decried 'poetic diction'[1] which they coined has often been anatomised, and is now dangerous to no one.

2. But for this diction Milton has not wholly to answer. He himself may sometimes be tired, and simply kept going by the habit of the grand manner. But it was no fault of his if only the externals of the manner were imitated. A concurrent influence was that of Pope's *Homer*, and of his more rhetorical style generally; and this was a snare to his successors. The faults native to Pope, and the faults exceptional in Milton, blended into a compound in which it is hard to discriminate the shares. Pope has mostly to answer for the periphrases which are the principal nuisance. The 'crimson fry' appear to come from his aquarium, and the 'plumy tribe' from his aviary. And the verbal arrangement of these tags, with their disyllabic epithet and monosyllabic noun, which fit so well, like a child's puzzle, into the fabric of the heroic line, proved also too attractive in blank verse. On the other hand, the wrenching of syntactic order, the free inversions, and the unnatural shifting of epithets, are due to a passion for copying the Miltonic period with its involved structure and harmonies. It was Milton's music, above all, that haunted, and tempted, and inspired, and also overthrew, Young and Thomson and their whole company. How near they came to their pattern, the examples in this chapter may show. The wonder remains that they often did so well.

3. But, again, these poets often show another and a sounder impulse, which is to *play* with their Milton, as though they must not be too solemn in his presence after all. The heroic style can be lowered well enough, and that without disrespect, to cheerful or homely purposes, such as describing the cider-press or the hop-field. Had not Virgil made poetry out of such things? The *Georgics* were much in the mind of these disciples of Milton. The actual parodies of his style, which started with the *Splendid Shilling* of John Phillips, are a small affair. But writers like Somervile and Armstrong pay Milton the half-serious tribute of adjusting his style to the scenes of the hunting-field, and even of the consulting-room.

IX

Many of these features can be traced in Thomson; yet the moment we name Thomson, we think not only of his poetical

reading, but of that great phenomenon of the time, the renewal of the feeling for natural beauty [1] and grandeur. As all know, he marks a great stage in this process, and his achievement is carried on by Gray and Collins, by Cunningham and Chatterton, and by many a lesser poet. The following chapters must re-tell a part of this familiar story. It has been much investigated, but still awaits a full review. For it was not only the poets who were, literally, recovering their senses. The same awakening is found in the novels, the memoirs, the diaries, and the books of travel. The 'return to nature' is fitful, intermittent, and unconcerted: that is to say, it is seen in persons far apart, who know nothing of one another; there are flowery patches in unexpected spots. Even the philosophers are not exempt from the influence: there are the happy descriptions of scenery in Berkeley's *Alciphron*. And the philosophers [2] actually furthered the sentiment for nature. It is now clear that the *Characteristics* of Shaftesbury, and even the theories of Hutcheson on the nature of beauty (see Ch. XVII.), told directly or obliquely on poets like Thomson and Akenside, and helped to exalt their actual sensations of things seen and heard into something like a cult, or half-mystical creed, which gives us many a foretaste of Wordsworth. The 'natural religion' of the deists, with its emphasis on the loveliness of creation as a proof of theism, wrought in the same direction; so that this derided and seemingly forgotten school after all left its legacy. A more immediate influence was that of the painters,[3] whether of the tradition of Claude and Poussin, or of the early school of English water-colour. They shaped many a poetical description; and they also affected the new development of landscape gardening.[4] This rested on the conception that nature herself has to be trained to be like a picture, and that there may be something wrong with her if it cannot be done—if she cannot be *made* 'picturesque.' The experiments of Shenstone, and the theorising of writers like William Gilpin, attest this belief. But the root of the matter is the direct fresh unbookish apprehension of visible and audible beauty; of sky and water, of meadows and mountains, of ploughland and garden, of flowers and birds [5] and insects. And, for the poets, the real problem was to get a *language* that would not misstate their impressions; nay, that would not fatally cloud and dull their very senses. This was to be a long struggle, which can be watched in writer after writer. The present work does not profess to trace such a history, but only to review artists and their art. Even so, the reader will find abundant traces of this great change in the

English mind. The first example is the author of the *Seasons*. He was at once popular, for his good work and for his bad alike. He does not seem to have been one of the artists who know when they are writing well. His pages were to be strewn with barren wastes; and he was to be led away, by the most admirable motives, into producing *Sophonisbas* and *Britannias*. But he felt that in his descriptions of scenery he was doing something new, or rather was recovering a lost inspiration. As we all know, it had dwindled down; it had just been kept alive, in the shade, by Lady Winchelsea and Parnell; and more vividly, as will be seen, by Dyer. Thomson's own language is worth quoting; it is found in the second edition of *Winter*, published in June 1726, and is pleasantly flushed and youthful:

> Nothing can have a better influence towards the revival of poetry than the choosing of great, and serious, subjects; such as, at once, amuse the fancy, enlighten the head, and warm the heart. These give a weight, and dignity, to the poem. . . .
>
> And what are we commonly entertained with, on these occasions, save forced, unaffecting fancies; little, glittering prettinesses; mixed turns of wit, and expression; which are as widely different from native poetry, as buffoonery is from the perfection of human thinking? A genius fired with the charms of truth, and nature, is tuned to a sublimer pitch, and scorns to associate with such subjects. . . .

Thomson clearly thinks that true poetry, in the year 1726, is dead, and that he is destined to resuscitate it. Men have forgotten the scripture itself; and he speaks first of the Book of Job with its 'description of the grand works of nature,' and then quotes the *Georgics* (*Me vero primum*, etc.); and he breaks out:

> I know no subject more elevating, more amusing, more ready to awake the poetical enthusiasm, the philosophical reflection, and the moral sentiment, than the works of nature. Where can we meet such variety, such beauty, such magnificence? All that enlarges, and transports, the soul? What more inspiring than a calm, wide, survey of them? In every dress nature is greatly charming! whether she puts on the crimson robes of the morning! the strong effulgence of noon! the sober suit of the evening! or the deep sables of blackness and tempest!

We do not expect any writer in a didactic age to take the point of view of the pure artist, and simply to say that he wants to paint. But Thomson's exalted ideals, if they often diverted him from his true business, also impelled him to go about it.

A son of the manse, James Thomson [1] (1700-1748) at the age

of twenty-four forsook his purpose of entering the ministry, and came to London with his mind full of the scenery of the Jed, of the Bible, and of Virgil : an excellent equipment for his purpose. He had a wallet of juvenile verses ; and he had written a rhymed elegy on his mother containing a few lines of great beauty. In March 1726 he published *Winter*. In the edition that followed in June are a number of changes. Thomson's revisions [1] of this and of the other *Seasons* were unending, and have to be studied with an ample *apparatus criticus*. The dates of the first editions are as follows : *Summer*, 1727 ; *Spring*, 1728 ; and *Autumn*, in the first collected edition of the *Seasons*, 1730. Much rehandling followed ; the last edition corrected by the author appeared in 1746, and this is what we usually read ; but the ' first sprightly runnings,' and also the omissions, must be examined, if we would do justice to the *Seasons*.

Whilst writing the poem, Thomson also produced his exalted lines *To the Memory of Sir Isaac Newton* (1727), with their notable passage on the hues of the rainbow. From 1730 to 1736 he must have been chiefly engaged upon *Liberty*, a work of more than three thousand lines of blank verse : a high-minded but on the whole dreary effort, in which the brilliant touches of Greek and Roman landscape stand out from the rest. The history of freedom culminates in the glorious ' prospect ' which greeted the British patriot in the year 1736, when the last ' part ' of the poem appeared. A long period followed, at once fertile and barren. It includes most of the tragedies, referred to in the last chapter. Thomson's real work now was to revise the *Seasons* and to write the long-meditated *Castle of Indolence*, which appeared in 1748, the year of his death. But his miscellaneous verse, of various date, must not be overlooked. He could, on occasion, write admirably in the heroic couplet ; and some of his memorial lines are in the nobler strain, and also in the easier modulation, associated with that measure :

> A friend, when dead, is but removed from sight,
> Hid in the lustre of eternal light ;
> Oft with the mind he wonted converse keeps
> In the lone walk, or, when the body sleeps,
> Lets in a wandering ray, and all elate
> Wings and attracts her to another state.
>
> (*On the Death of Mr. Aikman.*)

Thomson, too, has sometimes a lyrical touch ; and there is more than simple gallantry in ' Hard is the fate of him who loves,' and, better still, in ' Tell me, thou soul of her I love.'

X

The *Seasons* are sometimes described as a scion of the old 'local poem,' of the type of *Cooper's Hill*; but they are not much like it, except in their discursiveness. They are a miscellany, and really consist of passages of poetry laced together by passages of verse. They might serve to point the paradox of Edgar Poe, that a *long* poem 'does not exist.' There are plenty of what one critic of Thomson calls his *hors d'œuvre*: protests against cruelty to animals; pathetic tales limpidly but rather insipidly told; sallies of political and humanitarian feeling; praises of Chesterfield, or of Wilmington, or of Dodington; reflections in the vein of the *Essay on Man*; and echoes of Virgilian pantheism. In these passages, it would be wrong to deny, poetry is sometimes present; but it is oftener round the corner. Thomson, unlike Pope, is always sincere. But it is the English landscapes and cloudscapes and the country scenes that hold the mind and give to the *Seasons* such unity as they have. Sometimes, indeed, Thomson triumphs when he describes that of which he has only read. Two of his most musical lines are inspired by the flowers that grow among the frosts of Lapland:

> Where pure Niemi's fairy mountains rise,
> And fringed with roses Tenglio rolls his stream.

He was the first English poet of any power who made the description of natural things the primary subject of a long work. For a parallel we must go back to Gavin Douglas and the *Prologues* to his *Æneid*. Landscape, though abundant in the poets, had usually been a background, or incidental; or, as in *L'Allegro*, had been so inwrought that we think first of the writer and his mood rather than of the object. Thomson's scenes are marked, first of all, by the resolution to observe nature exactly, and even literally; next, by his liking for wide spaces of land and water, and horizons of cloud; then, by his inclination to strong and even violent colouring, which does not exclude a subtlety in giving muffled, or subdued, effects of light and shadow, as of the sun striking through mist and rain; and lastly, by a steady endeavour to unite these pictorial effects with musical ones. And, in general, he succeeds in proportion as he can bring himself to be simple. Many of the changes and additions in his text show an inclination, and not always a happy one, to elaborate. The chorus of birds in *Spring* (1727) is much more birdlike—though the sophisticated element is

already there—than in the 1744 version of *Winter*. In the first passage,

> Up-springs the lark,
> Shrill-voiced and loud, the messenger of morn;
> Ere yet the shadows fly, he mounted sings
> Amid the dawning clouds, and from their haunts
> Calls up the tuneful nations. Every copse
> Thick-wove, and tree irregular, and bush,
> Bending with dewy moisture o'er the heads
> Of the coy quiristers who lodge within,
> Are prodigal of harmony . . .
> The blackbird whistles from the thorny brake;
> The mellow bullfinch answers from the grove. . . .

In *Winter* comes the somewhat overloaded picture of the storm, which terrifies beast and bird:

> With broadened nostrils to the sky upturned,
> The conscious heifer snuffs the stormy gale . . .
> . . . but chief the plumy race,
> The tenants of the sky, its changes speak.
> Retiring from the downs, where all day long
> They picked their scanty fare, a blackening train
> Of clamorous rooks thick-urge their weary flights,
> And seek the closing shelter of the grove.
> Assiduous, in his bower, the wailing owl
> Plies his sad song. The cormorant on high
> Wheels from the deep, and screams along the land.

The observation is as precise as ever, but a frost is settling upon the language. Not that Thomson's toil was idle; there are touches added that make all the difference. In 1726 he wrote:

> . . . An icy gale, that, in its mid career,
> Arrests the bickering stream.

But in 1730 the wind becomes visible:

> An icy gale, oft shifting, o'er the pool
> Breathes a blue film, and in its mid career
> Arrests the bickering stream.

These are the things in Thomson that we remember: the 'blue film'; the 'yellow mist Far-smoking o'er the interminable plain'; the shepherd lying 'with half-shut eyes, beneath the floating shade Of willows grey'; and 'the pale, descending year, yet pleasing still.'

Thomson, when he is not describing, abounds in all sorts of high-minded declamation which comes short of poetry. Yet it would be untrue to say that he is a poet only when he is describing. He does not try, like Pope, to reason in verse; nor does he attempt 'metaphysical' verse in the stricter sense. But he

has a 'religion of nature' of his own, which sometimes finds expression in his purest style; prophesying Wordsworth, and perhaps helping to inspire him, in passages that we might think were from the *Prelude*. Nature is not only a 'subject,' but a refuge and an inspirer. In any case, light is cast upon the 'history of a poet's mind.' One confession portrays Thomson's youth, and reveals the inner motive power of the *Seasons*:

> With frequent foot,
> Pleased have I, in my cheerful morn of life,
> When nursed by careless solitude, I lived,
> And sung of nature with unceasing joy,
> Pleased have I wandered through your rough domain;
> Trod the pure virgin-snows, myself as pure;
> Heard the winds roar, and the big torrent burst;
> Or seen the deep fermenting tempest brewed,
> In the grim evening-sky. Thus passed the time,
> Till through the lucid chambers of the South
> Looked out the joyous Spring, looked out, and smiled.

From what other source can Wordsworth have learnt the cadence of his autobiographic style? Lines like

> knowledge, sacred peace, and virtue pure,
> Sacred, substantial, never-fading bliss,

strengthen this impression; and so do the lines in *Spring*, which for some bad reason Thomson omitted after the edition of 1730:

> thus the glad skies,
> The wide-rejoicing earth, the woods, the streams,
> With every life they hold, down to the flower
> That paints the lowly vale, or insect-wing
> Waved o'er the shepherd's slumber, touch the mind
> To nature tuned, with a light-flying hand
> Invisible, quick-urging, through the nerves,
> The glittering spirits, in a flood of day.

There are phrases in these extracts which Wordsworth might not have let pass, as being 'poetic diction' of the wrong mint; but the strain, after all, is nearer to the *Tintern Abbey* of 1798 than it is to the *Descriptive Sketches* written in 1791. Thomson now and then attained at once the style towards which his successor had painfully to work his way. His own course, no doubt, was also a hindered one, and in the *Seasons* he is never quite sure how to write.

XI

He aimed at nothing less than the grand style; he found it in Milton; and he sought to appropriate, chiefly for the description

of scenery, Milton's verse and language. Scholars have dissected [1] Thomson's imitative technique to the last fibre, and the results need only be glanced at. His Latinised vocabulary set a bad example ; the ' conscious heifer ' and the ' faint erroneous ray ' tell their own tale, and so do Thomson's own inventions of the same kind. It is too late in the day to ridicule the ' sordid stream,' the ' gravid boughs,' and the ' fond sequacious herd,' or terms like ' effulged,' ' protended,' and ' constringent.' The circumlocutions, like the ' copious fry ' and the ' bleating herd,' are in the same case. This last kind of ornament is found, of course, in many poets, and the only question is whether or no it is heated by the imagination. The Anglo-Saxons, and Pope, and Tennyson all use it in different ways ; and Thomson was encouraged by Pope's practice, with the result that we are usually left cold. Another device, in its origin Latin, but suggested more immediately by Milton, hampers him yet more. This is the dislocation of the epithet, which comes to count as an adverb, or rather as the logical predicate of the sentence :

> See where the winding vale its lavish stores,
> Irriguous, spreads :

—an irritating trick, that often mars a good landscape like a smear.

In spite of these blemishes, Thomson's management of his form is interesting and beautiful. He felt to the full the supremacy of the instrument which he was learning to play. He tried, with fitful success, to reproduce, first of all, the variety and power of Milton's single lines ; next, the modulations within the line, and the overflow from line to line ; and, lastly, the concerted music of the long Miltonic period, with its overture and swell and always triumphant close. And this close, now on a louder now on a softer note, Thomson was always trying to achieve ; to seize, as it were, the ghost of a tune that haunted him. He usually fails ; while seeking to end with a crash, he is apt to end with a kind of slam, like that of a banging door. This is the point at which most followers of Milton break down. They cannot gain the effect of

> Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chimeras dire,

nor yet the effect of

> And Eden raised in the waste wilderness.

One passage from the *Seasons* may illustrate Thomson's cadences. It has the fault described ; and it certainly does not

give us Milton's undulations within the line, or his melting of wave into wave as the new line begins; but it does show a true and splendid management of the individual lines, which belong to what has been well called the 'single-moulded'[1] species: the Muse, he says, has passed through spring and summer:

> Then swept o'er Autumn with the shadowy gale;
> And now among the wintry clouds again,
> Rolled in the doubling storm, she tries to soar;
> To swell her note with all the rushing winds;
> To suit her sounding cadence to the floods,—
> As is her theme, her numbers wildly great.

The melody is true nearly up to the last, and then, before it has wrought itself out, it jerks to a stop. But we need not be too pedantic over all Thomson's drawbacks of language and versification. We get used to them, as to an old-fashioned costume. Still, it is clear that poetry had to get rid of them. Thomson himself abandoned them, and really found himself, in the *Castle of Indolence*.

XII

By the year 1748 the pastime of copying, or pretending to copy, the manner of Spenser[2] had long been familiar. It had lapsed for a whole generation, since late in Charles's days; and, when it was first revived by Matthew Prior, the result was not like Spenser at all. Prior's *Ode* to Queen Anne of 1706, like his *Henry and Emma* (in which, losing his sense of humour, he had painted up the features of the Nut-Brown Maid), is written in the diction of the day; and moreover Spenser's stanza[3] is pulled out into ten lines, with its rhyme-harmonies all falsified. This unlucky perversion of the measure was to have many imitators; and in his trifle called *Colin's Mistakes* (1721) Prior had contrived yet another and a worse one. Besides, the whole movement of the lines is 'Augustan'; and the see-saw of the couplet is heard all too plainly in the alexandrine

> His presence glads the wood, his orders guide the sport.

By the guide and gladdener is meant Robert Harley, attending a fox-hunt. But these pieces, however unlike the real Spenser, set the example of using him for purposes of pleasantry. This is a different thing from burlesquing Spenser; it is an effort to copy his lighter and more sportive style. But the two processes shade off into each other, owing to the notion that Spenser, however much to be respected, was essentially a 'simple' and

naïf old poet, whose dead language was mildly funny. Like Chaucer and Milton, he was a classic, whom it was the order of the day to use as a studio model.

The first infusion of Spenser's own poetry and colouring into an imitation also dates from the reign of Anne. In 1713 a young Cantab, Samuel Croxall, had published a tolerable *pastiche*, in the correct measure, and in the nature of a practical joke. He stated that his great-grandfather, 'a schoolfellow and intimate acquaintance of the poet,' had transmitted—what had been 'never before printed'—an *Original Canto of Spenser's Faerie Queene*. In the next year Croxall came out with a second production of the kind, and with an ode in honour of the arrival of George the First. These three works show facility, and also a genuine feeling for Spenser's colour and music. There are many lines which can be noticed, and that not merely for their date; such as this panel-picture of Liberty:

> An ample flasket in her hand she bore,
> In which sweet flowers, ripe fruits, and every grain
> That springs from earth, were piled in plenteous store;
> And, as she walked, she shook with much disdain
> The rusty reliques of a broken chain:
> Which lately finding on some wretch enthralled,
> She kindly rent the iron links in twain;
> And to new life the meagre vassal called,
> Healing his tender limbs by the rough shackles galled.

The writers who use Spenser's own stanza are usually the most faithful to him in other ways and are duly rewarded. They have a freer sprinkling of his diction, which thus becomes the revival of a revival, or archaism at two removes; and they have more of his richness, of his imagery, and of his atmosphere. But whether they keep his measure or not, they are never his disciples for all the time. The so-called Augustan language and temper are never far away; and the two styles, try as the poet may to beat them together, will never mix. The list of Spenserians is a long one; at least thirty have been counted between Croxall and Burns, by whom the true stanza is retained. In many more it is in some way altered, and spoilt. After the neglected Croxall there is something of a gap. Pope's brilliant little piece, the *Alley*, shows, it must be said, the streak of the guttersnipe in his nature. Akenside's *Virtuoso* is also brilliant, but is clean and amusing; and in the same year came the first version of Shenstone's *Schoolmistress* (Ch. XIII.), which is all these things and poetry besides. There follows a series of six poems, all before the *Castle of Indolence* in 1748; but I can

hardly bring myself to name any of them except Richard Owen Cambridge's *Archimage*. This short and cheerful skit relates how the writer lured a young lady into a boat, and gives excellent burlesque descriptions of the crew. The leaden *Education of Achilles* by Robert Bedingfield and the inflated *Musaeus* of William Mason figure in the catalogue. The road was thus open for Thomson, who had many examples before him of the ancient diction, of the resuscitated stanza, and of the use of both for pleasantry and burlesque. But he went back to the fountain-head.

XIII

Some verses of the *Castle of Indolence* might go into the *Faerie Queene*, and would hardly be known for changelings. For nearly a hundred lines of the first canto the sleepy music is kept up without the dialect of the Georgian age intruding. The stanza is fully understood, and the charm remains, which never fails in the original, of the rhyme repeated at the fifth line, like the turning over of a wave. There is also the pomp of the closing alexandrine, sometimes varied by a pause after the light seventh syllable :

> Loose life, unruly passions, and diseases pale.

The old spell is laid at once on the dreaming vision and on the drowsy hearing. Then, unluckily waking up, the poet slips into another manner ; there are ' soft gales of passion,' and the ' crimson-spotted fry,' namely trout, and, worse still, the ' social sense.' These two strands of diction remain interlaced, with an effect quaintly disconcerting ; the poetry going out and coming in again, more or less in correspondence. In the best passages colour and sound unite, as in Spenser himself :

> as when, beneath the beam
> Of summer-moons, the distant woods among,
> Or by some flood, all silvered with the gleam,
> The soft-embodied fays through airy portal stream.

There are yet other virtues in the poem. Spenser has a subdued humour of his own and a power of gay or bitter invective. Thomson has humour too, and some passages in the *Seasons* belong to the poetry of manners. The drinking-bout in *Autumn* is in what was called the ' Dutch style ' ; and, as an afterthought, a Hogarthian figure was inserted :

> Perhaps some Doctor, of tremendous paunch,
> Awful and deep, a black abyss of drink,
> Outlives them all.

This is not like Spenser or Milton ; but the same vein occurs in the *Castle of Indolence*, in the admirable figures of the page and the porter.

To all this there is a half-serious and somewhat ragged allegorical lining. To complete the tribute to the sage and serious poet, Indolence must be not only enjoyed but reproved. As with Spenser, we care more for the *right* side of the fabric than for the lining. The Morphean music of the Hall of Idleness is better than the lecture. Yet Thomson, like his master, can satirise well ; and the picture of the Mirror of Vanity, with its sharp fling at the idler and the waster, shows another side of his power. He has yet a further resource when he falls to drawing playful sketches of his contemporaries. They are his own friends ; and some of them would be forgotten but for their presence in the Castle. But they also include Lyttelton, Quin, and Armstrong, the poet of the ' art of preserving health ' ; who wrote one line, ' A bard there was, more fat than bard beseems,' in the picture of Thomson himself. The rest of this was by Lyttelton ; and Armstrong added the medical, the too professional, verses at the end of the first canto.

In the second, the ingredients are much the same ; but, alas, poetry and Spenser begin to recede. Thomson becomes didactic, patriotic, and British. Indolence is now a monster to be overthrown by the ' Knight of arts and industry,' who is in turn an athlete, an artist, a man of science, and a patron of agriculture. There is vigorous rhetoric, but we long for the intermitted music. Parts of this canto, which Byron may have studied, curiously resemble a harangue by Childe Harold. At the end is a startling burst of realism, when the swine, descendants of Spenser's Gryll, charge grunting through the town of Brentford. With all its disparities, the *Castle of Indolence* remains not only the best imitation of Spenser, but the most original poem amongst all the imitations.

XIV

It is convenient here to name a few of the Spenserian[1] pieces published between the *Castle of Indolence* and Beattie's *Minstrel* (1771-4). Thomson's success was a sad stimulus to production ; but there are some green spots in the desert. The *Education* of Gilbert West (1751), a lumbering allegory of ninety-two stanzas, is scarcely one of them : Parnassus is approached from a ' verdant valley,' which is crossed by a sheet of water,

'hight of philology the lake'; but the happiest lines are no bad echo of Shenstone's *Schoolmistress*:

> And everywhere this spacious valley o'er,
> Fast by each stream was seen a numerous throng
> Of beardless striplings, to the birch-crowned shore
> By nurses, guardians, fathers, dragged along;
> Who, helpless, meek, and innocent of wrong,
> Were torn reluctant from the tender side
> Of their fond mothers, and by faitours strong,
> By power made insolent, and hard by pride,
> Were driven by furious rage, and lashed into the tide.

There is more matter and melody in the *Dream* of Dr. William Wilkie (1759), the painful composer of the *Epigoniad*. For the bare and flat style of this attempt at an epic, Homer is made to reproach Wilkie; who makes somewhat impudent excuse, claiming that if he had borrowed from Homer, so had Virgil, and receiving 'a few wreaths' from the hand of the mollified Homer. But he praises Homer not ill in Spenser's more diluted manner:

> For him he seemed, who sung Achilles' rage
> In lofty numbers that shall never die;
> And wise Ulysses' tedious pilgrimage,
> So long the sport of sharp adversity:
> The praises of his merit Fame on high
> With her shrill trump for ever loud doth sound:
> With him no bard for excellence can vie,
> Of all that late or ancient e'er were found;
> So much he doth surpass even bards the most renowned.

The shade of Homer further explains that though Shakespeare, 'disdaining narrow rules,' 'broke all the cobweb-limits fixed by fools,' still there *are* higher rules, which he does obey and which were taught to him by 'dame Nature.' This passage, preceding as it does by several years Johnson's *Preface* to Shakespeare, seems worth quoting. But the Spenserian who may most safely be named in the company of James Thomson and Shenstone is the Rev. William Thompson, of whom little is known except that he was a Fellow of Queen's College, Oxford; that he held a living in Oxfordshire; and that he edited and annotated Joseph Hall and William Browne. Thompson, as early as 1736, had written an epithalamy on the marriage of Frederick Prince of Wales, and also a piece called the *Nativity*, but did not publish either till 1758. He had thus been early in the field, though not before the public; and of all the band, except James Thomson, he has the fullest share of Spenserian luxury and tunefulness. These two poems are in regular nine-line verse; and

there were few men in 1736 who could have written the last line of the following four :

> For thee he burns, for thee he sighs and prays,
> Pours out his soul to thee, nor rest can know,
> But dreams of thee long, livelong nights and days,
> By beauty led through all Love's rosy-thorny ways.

(Can Swinburne have recalled this in his lines, ' Love laid his sleepless head On a thorny rosy bed ' ?) And this is a verse from the *Nativity* :

> Jocund to lead the way, with sparkling rays,
> Danced a star-errant up the orient sky ;
> The new-born splendour, streaming o'er the place
> Where Jesus lay in bright humility,
> Seemed a fixt star unto the wondering eye.
> Three seers unwist the captain-glory led,
> Of awful semblance, but of sable dye ;
> Full royally along the lawn they tread,
> And each with circling gold embravèd had his head.

Thompson's vein is best seen in his *Hymn to May*, although, most perversely and with many arguments, he chooses here the mutilated stanza of Phineas Fletcher's *Purple Island*. The jolly temper of the old pastoral muse had long since disappeared, and the bucolics of Pope, Gay, and the rest, have quite other virtues ; but now it is heard again :

> Your maypole deck with flowery coronal ;
> Sprinkle the flowery coronal with wine ;
> And, in the nimble-footed galliard, all
> Shepherds and shepherdesses, lively join,
> Hither from village street and hamlet fair,
> From bordering cot and distant glen repair,
> Let youth indulge its sport, to eld bequeath its care.
>
> Ye wanton Dryads and light-tripping fawns,
> Ye jolly satyrs full of lustyhead,
> And ye that haunt the hills, the brooks, the lawns,
> O come, with rural chaplets gay dispread :
> With heel so nimble wear the springing grass,
> To thrilling bagpipe, or to tinkling brass,
> Or foot it to the reed ; Pan pipes himself apace.

We may wish that Keats could have read that, and perhaps he did ; for it was a flower to be found growing in the cemeteries of Chalmers and Anderson. But now to revert to the followers of Milton.

XV

The long-living Edward Young,[1] who was born in 1683, five years before Pope, and died in 1765, the year of the *Reliques*,

speaks for more than one age of literature. As the author of the *Night Thoughts* he lived to enjoy the commodity of fame, the 'universal passion,' which he had satirised in the reign of George the First. But his posthumous fates, had he foreseen them, might have inspired him to yet one more gloomy rumination. For a number of years, indeed, we may think of his ghost as contented. The *Night Thoughts* were long accounted the greatest and gravest poem in the language since Milton, who was Young's avowed master; and, by the serious public, as far deeper, and more satisfactory and orthodox, than the *Essay on Man*.

> Aside their harps even seraphs flung,
> To hear thy sweet complaint, O Young!

observes, rather daringly, Dr. James Grainger in his *Ode to Solitude* (1755). The *Nights* went through many editions; were translated into many tongues, including Russian, Polish, and Hungarian; were admired, during the author's lifetime, by the devout Klopstock; and gave a sombre comfort to many pious spirits. A number of their lines became proverbial. Young's historical importance, and (in nautical terms) his 'displacement,' were thus very considerable. But he is now seldom read, or at least read through, for his own sake; and so, once more, the 'universal passion' seems to be unsatisfied. He aspired to the grand style, but could not keep it up, and overreached himself. Yet a poet he is, however fitfully. Flashes of splendour relieve his high-pitched monotony, and gusts of music break in upon his too emphatic 'drumming decasyllabon.' He has a vein of passionate genuine feeling which his wrong style and his affectation cannot wholly smother. He can be an admirable satirist; and he has a certain foresight as a critic, divining as he does, when near the end of his days, the change that was coming over the spirit of poetry.

Young might well have satirised himself. The streak of tragi-comedy in his career is not effaced by the new instalment of his letters which was published some years ago. He had the usual classical schooling; at first he bade fair to be an Oxford personage who had the entry among the London wits of both political camps. He knew Addison and Tickell, on whom he wrote elegies; and Tickell may well be the virtuous Philander of the *Night Thoughts*. He also knew Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and Pope, and Swift; it is Young who reports the saying of Swift that he would 'die at top.' He probably contributed to the *Guardian*; he rhymed flatteries to Lord

Lansdowne, and then a *Poem on the Last Day*, with a magniloquence which shows traces of power; and, in the same fashion, he paraphrased, and spoilt, part of the Book of Job (1719). In Young's next phase (1719-30) he is seen practising both the great heroic measures with vigour. His tragedies (Ch. XI.) are in the blank verse which was to be the vehicle of *Night Thoughts*; but meantime he luckily settled on the rhymed couplet (*le distique vengeur*, as one of his biographers calls it) for his satires. The seven numbers of the *Universal Passion* (1725-28) were collected in 1728, the title now being preceded by the words *Love of Fame*. They are well rounded off by the *Two Epistles to Mr. Pope* (1730), sundry frigidly emphatic odes and didactic pieces coming in the interval. Young's personal career is a mixture of the grotesque, the pathetic, and the decorous. By 1726 he was in orders, and was presently chaplain, first to the Prince of Wales, and then to the king; and a bishopric might seem to him the, not far off, 'divine event.' It never came; in 1730 Young retired, as it proved for life, to the rectory of Welwyn. He is found supplicating, at different times, Mrs. Howard, the Duke of Newcastle, and Archbishop Secker for preferment; being unwisely encouraged thereto by his friend and great patroness the Duchess of Portland. He once calls the Moon 'fair P——d of the skies.' Young descended far, even for his time, into the language of compliment; and was in the false position of a moralist, a preacher of Death and Judgment, of the Last Things, who is not paid at his own rates. He has himself, by a kind of irony, become a text for the declaimer; who in his turn has often, like Young, overdone the emphasis.

The first instalment of his great work, with its sounding title *The Complaint, or Night Thoughts on Life, Death, and Immortality*, came out in 1742, when he was fifty-nine. Eight more *Nights* followed within three years; and the collected *Nights* came out in 1747. Young had lost his wife, Lady Elizabeth Lee, the Lucia of the poem, and also his stepdaughter and her husband; but it is impossible, on the existing evidence, to identify Lorenzo and Narcissa [1] with any known persons. He had other family troubles, but also some temporal consolations. He became a personage, and an object of the literary pilgrim, and he received visitors of note; he had many friends, including Samuel Richardson; his domestic life was not without dignity, his bearing a singular compound of the funereal and the cheerful; he did not forget that he had been a wit; and he seldom ceased from writing. After *Night Thoughts* Young produced another

tragedy, the *Brothers*, which was played; *The Centaur Not Fabulous*, a series of letters in prose published in 1754, and aimed against the recently issued heresies of Bolingbroke; and, in 1759, the *Conjectures on Original Composition*, in the form of a letter to Richardson, which marks the progress of eighteenth-century criticism.

XVI

The *Universal Passion* preceded Pope's best work of the same kind, his *Imitations*, by some years; and though Young no doubt studied Pope, yet Pope may have learnt something from these finished 'characters.' They seldom, at least visibly, scarify real persons; there are no envenomed portraits of a known Atticus, or Bufo; and since all readers prefer to put a name to a victim, this forbearance may have cost Young some favour, even with posterity. But he is vivid, concrete, and dramatic; and he has the art of keeping up a very distinct rhythm while he moulds familiar speech into good, pedestrian verse. Poetry is hardly in question. Young, in his preface, takes the attitude of the smiling philosopher, and commands Horace and Cervantes as against Juvenal and Rabelais; against Rabelais, forsooth, because 'you want the gentleman to converse with in him,' despite so much genius and scholarship. But Young adds, soundly enough:

> Moreover, laughing satire bids the fairest for success. . . . This kind of satire only has any delicacy in it. Of this delicacy Horace is the best master: he appears in good humour while he censures; and therefore his censure has the more weight, as supposed to proceed from judgment, not from passion.

Young knows that he is stepping into a breach, and asks, 'Why slumbers Pope, who leads the tuneful train?' Addison is gone, while

> Congreve, who, crowned with laurels fairly won,
> Sits smiling at the goal while others run,
> —He will not write; and (more provoking still)
> Ye gods! he will not write, and Maevius will.

For all his professions, Young often slips into declamation; but his gallery of types—the boorish squire, the foppish book-buyer, the fool who is *out* of the fashion, and the couple who get divorced after five days owing to a dispute 'on Durfey's poesy and Bunyan's prose'—is well worth a visit. Here is one of his

invalids, from his satire upon women, which shows a pleasanter temper than Pope's attacks on the sex :

> Lemira 's sick ; make haste : the doctor call :
> He comes : but where 's his patient ? At the ball.
> The doctor stares ; her woman curtsies low,
> And cries, ' My lady, Sir, is always so :
> Diversions put her maladies to flight :
> True, she can't stand, but she can dance all night :
> I 've known my lady (for she loves a tune)
> For fevers take an opera in June :
> And, tho' perhaps you 'll think the practice bold,
> A midnight park is sovereign for a cold :
> With cholics, breakfasts of green fruit agree ;
> With indigestions, supper just at three.'
> ' A strange alternative,' replies Sir Hans,
> ' Must women have a doctor, or a dance ?
> Though sick to death, abroad they safely roam,
> But droop and die, in perfect health, at home :
> For want—but not of health, are ladies ill ;
> And rickets cure beyond the doctor's pill.'

The two letters in verse addressed to Pope have the same finish, if not the same sort of vivacity. But the gap between this strain and *Night Thoughts* is not so wide as it may seem ; for that solemn poem is always dropping back into points and epigrams ; not a little to our relief, except that we miss the rhyme :

> Though grey our heads, our thoughts and aims are green ;
> Like damaged clocks, whose hand and bell dissent,
> Folly sings six, while nature points at twelve.

XVII

There are nine lengthy books of the *Night Thoughts*. The first three, on ' death,' ' immortality,' and ' time,' are inspired by bereavement, and are full of undeniable passion ; but they have only the unity of a monotone. Man's lot is bitter, and his vice and folly are incurable, and death is a relief to the sordidness of life. But it soon appears that a leading aim of the poem is theological. It was to complete the plea of Pope for natural religion by a great defence of revelation. Also it was to upset the cheap optimism of the deist by showing the miseries of life and their true remedy. Titles like ' the Christian's triumph ' and ' the Infidel reclaimed ' speak for themselves ; and throughout the later *Nights* the heavy artillery is brought to bear on the unrepentant sinner, the flippant disbeliever, and the godless fribble. The mysterious, unidentified Lorenzo is knouted for

failings of this kind. All this appealed both to the public that wished to be reassured in its faith, and to the public that was wearying of cold finish and mundane verse.

Young, however, tears the passion of loss to tatters, and scolds humanity so hard that it refuses to listen. We know he is in earnest, and yet cease to believe him. His lack of proportion, and lapses of form, have been almost fatal. He can print unbelievable lines like 'Nature is dumb on this important point,' or 'Speed, thought's canal! speed, thought's criterion too!' and can address the sun as 'rude drunkard, rising rosy from the main!' All this is now much easier to notice than his poetic virtues, which are great, though swamped in the general marsh of the *Night Thoughts*. Like all the followers of Milton, he is haunted by a music that he cannot catch; but again and again it is heard in the distance. What none of these poets could compass was the undulating sea-like period with its gentle or reverberating close. Young, so well practised in rhyming, thought habitually in single lines, and could sometimes make them in the grand manner:

> To drink the spirit of the golden day,

which is like Blake; or

> The incommunicable lustre bright,

which is Miltonic; or

> The shaft flew thrice, and thrice my peace was slain,

which is original. Such things are sown about the *Night Thoughts*, not often enough to keep it alive, but often enough to make us go on searching. And Young is ever trying to break up and interweave his lines, and always falling back on his ten-syllabled unit. He knows that he comes short; and he invokes the shades of the poets, not without magnificence:

> Wrapt in shade,
> Prisoner of darkness! to the silent hours
> How often I repeat their rage divine,
> To lull my griefs, and steal my heart from woe!
> I roll their raptures, but not catch their fire.
> Dark, though not blind, like thee, Maeonides!
> Or, Milton! thee; ah, could I reach your strain!
> Or his, who made Maeonides our own.

In another more familiar and noble passage the rhythm, under the pressure of the flood within, becomes swifter and more continuous, and also more independent:

> I, who late,
> Emerging from the shadows of the grave,

> Where grief detained me prisoner, mounting high,
> Threw wide the gates of everlasting day,
> And called mankind to glory; shook off pain,
> Mortality shook off, in ether pure,
> And struck the stars; now feel my spirits fail;
> They drop me from the zenith; down I rush,
> Like him whom fable fledged with waxen wings,
> In sorrow drowned—but not in sorrow lost.

This strain is oftener found in the first four *Nights*, which are, for all their rhetoric and faults, a true outpouring of grief. The next four are more theological, and the new ingredient does the poetry little good. In the ninth Young finds a grandiose sort of inspiration in the starry heavens, and partly recovers himself; but, needless to say, neither he nor any English poet has made of the new astronomy what Milton made of the old. This topic, like his mourning and his apologetics and his preaching, he spun out too long for the patience of later times, though not too long for his own. He may be said, through his powers as well as through his failure, to have shown that a work of epical scale cannot be made on such terms.

Young was much older than Thomson, though the *Universal Passion* began to appear in the same year as *Winter*; and a critic has well noted that while Thomson's progress, in the matter of versification,[1] was from blank measure towards rhyme, with Young the order is reversed. Young, we may judge, was encouraged to drop rhyming by the success of the *Seasons*, and studied them, on the technical side, equally with Milton. He goes further than Thomson, and is much more offensive, in the adoption or coinage of Latinisms. An alarming list of these has been collected; but *solute* and *plausive*, *feculence* and *indagators*, and a multitude of the like, have condemned themselves, for prose as well as for verse, and have now only a philological interest. They are not, like the learned words of Sir Thomas Browne, or Jeremy Taylor's 'little *antepasts* of heaven,' invented for their beauty; and here they need only be mentioned. The strange compounds and idioms with which the *Nights* abound are in the same case. I have noted how rigidly linear, on the whole, Young left his blank verse; and the habit seems to have grown upon him. Indeed, much of the impression that he made on his age was due, surely, to his trick of sheer, gloomy, ruthless iteration, like that of Edgar Poe's raven sitting on the bust of Pallas. Yet Young had that in him which could stir the genius of Blake, through whose designs the *Night Thoughts*, if not a work of art themselves, at least become the cause of art in another.

XVIII

It is not surprising to find that Young's prose, both in his letters and in his writings, is painfully mannered; affected we can scarcely call it, when the attitude has eaten so deeply into him that it threatens to become the man. At any rate it mars a style of much native energy. The six sermons in letter form, entitled *The Centaur Not Fabulous*, are little known, but have their interest. They are directed, like the later *Nights*, against the heresies fired off from the 'blunderbuss,' as Johnson called it, which Mallet received from the hands of the departing Bolingbroke. The 'centaur' is an old friend, more beast than man, the freethinking 'libertine'—another Lorenzo. And these empty tirades of Young in prose show how completely his writing in this vein falls to pieces when it is no longer held together by the bare fact of metre. There is a scrap of death-bed dialogue in this work which, quaintly enough, is infected by the style of *Clarissa*; and Richardson must have enjoyed the tribute from an old associate:

> His friend being much touched, even to tears, at this (who could forbear? I could not), with a most affectionate look, he said: 'Keep those tears for thyself. I have undone thee. Dost weep for me? That 's cruel. What can pain me more?' His friend, much affected, would have left him. 'No, stay. *Thou* still mayst *hope*.'

Young was no judge of his own poetry, or he would have written less; but he knew what poetry was. In 1759 he read out his forthcoming *Conjectures*[1] *on Original Composition* in the house of Richardson and in the presence of Johnson. He had begun as a writer of the old *régime*; he had gone on to the cult of Milton; and now he expresses the hunger of the mid-century for some new thing, or rather for the oldest and greatest things. He enters a plea for the free imagination, which is not unlike that of Shakespeare's Theseus:

> But if an Original, by being as excellent as new, adds admiration to surprise, then are we at the writer's mercy; on the strong wing of his imagination we are snatched from Britain to Italy, from climate to climate, from pleasure to pleasure; we have no home, no thought, of our own, till the magician drops his pen; and then, falling down into ourselves, we awake to flat realities, lamenting the change, like the beggar who dreamt himself a prince.

And these great masters, Young adds with a flash of insight,

include not only Pindar and Shakespeare, but Scotus and Aquinas; since

both equally show an original unindebted energy; the *vigor igneus* and *coelestis origo* burn in both.

Moreover, a true 'original' is great enough to draw freely on his forerunners; and thus 'we thank Aeschylus for Sophocles.' Also there is the milder kind of genius, not to be forgotten; and we hear the praise of Addison's 'sweet, elegant, Virgilian prose.' Put some of these sentences into French, and they might not discredit Sainte-Beuve. Others chiefly show the set of contemporary taste. There is a good word for *Cato*, which may not suit the stage, but which should be read 'in our calmer delights of recess.' And Young, in his ardour, dreams that one day Homer and Demosthenes may come to seem the '*dawn* of divine genius.' This is clearly a relic of the notion that the 'moderns' must have progressed, in matters of art as of science, beyond the 'ancients.' Then Young censures the rhymed tragedies of Dryden, because rhyme is 'absolute death' to a tragedy. We can fancy the interrupting boom of Johnson, and the nervous efforts of Richardson to keep the peace, when they further heard that in the case of epic poetry of Pope's *Homer*, rhyme is *only* a 'sore disease.' But these *Conjectures* reveal a true afflatus, and a passion for the best things. Genius is opposed to copying, and creation to mere studio-work, and there is no worship of the 'rules.' All these ideas had long been in the air, and many a parallel can be quoted from Addison and Pope. But, as Herder remarked, there is an 'electric spark' in Young's tractate which is worth many disquisitions. He issued it three years after Joseph Warton's essay on Pope, and three years before Bishop Hurd (Ch. XVI.) had justified the 'Gothic' poetry of the *Faerie Queene*. In his demand for the great 'originals,' and for magic in literature, he preceded Macpherson, and Chatterton, and the *Reliques*.

XIX

Another poem of the sepulchre, the *Grave* of Robert Blair, published in 1743, which also attracted the imagination of Blake, is much shorter and livelier than the *Night Thoughts*; and it is a relief, in spite of its topic, to read it, after the saurian didactic works of the age. Of Blair little is known except that he was a Scottish minister, and that he can write in the familiar Miltonic manner and catch it more happily than his fellows:

> Dark as was chaos, ere the infant sun
> Was rolled together, or had tried his beams
> Athwart the gloom profound ;—

But his true models are the old dramatists ; he was steeped in their gloomier imagery, and also in their freer blank verse, or he could never have written such lines, with their characteristic spare syllables, as

> the sickly taper . . .
> Lets fall a supernumerary horror,
> And only serves to make thy night more irksome,

Like Beddoes, he embroiders in his own way on the old images, and on Hamlet's speech in the graveyard :

> Where are the jesters now ? the men of health
> Complexionally pleasant ? where the droll ?
> Whose every look and gesture was a joke
> To clapping theatres and shouting crowds,
> And made even thick-lipped, musing Melancholy
> To gather up her face into a smile
> Before she was aware ? Ah ! sullen now,
> And dumb as the green turf that covers them.

Blair is an Elizabethan in virtue of the satiric temper in which he faces the lot of mortality. No doubt the result is a little *macabre* ; but that is all in keeping. When he talks of ' worms, and graves, and epitaphs ' he is, like Shakespeare's Richard, not very serious. Indeed, he has little real pathos or tenderness ; while Young is all too serious, and we cease to tolerate his high falsetto. The change in poetic temper may be seen in Gray's *Elegy*, which was probably begun while these poets were weaving their *immortelles*. Gray's feeling is calm and profound, not excited, and finds expression in his even high workmanship.

Blair's poem, short as it is, is uneven enough ; he drops into pulpit commonplace, and then suddenly shakes it off, and startles us with a living poetic phrase, or with the sound of a music that is older than Milton's. Rarely in the *Pleasures of Imagination*, or in the *Ruins of Rome* ; and oftener, but still with dreadful intervals of nullity, in the *Night Thoughts*, do we come on flashes like

> Oh ! how he longs
> To have his passport signed, and be dismissed !

Or on pictures like that of the schoolboy among the tombstones :

> Sudden he starts, and hears, or thinks he hears,
> The sound of something purring at his heels ;
> Full fast he flies . . .

Or of the body

> That drops into the dark and noisome grave
> Like a disabled pitcher of no use.

Such things figured freely in the two blue-bound volumes of *Beautiful Poetry* that regaled our childhood with scraps and fragments and set us wondering where the 'beauty' lay; on the contrary, they were rather dreadful. They are not dreadful now, but they are poetry; and so is Blair's finale,

> 'Tis but a night, a long and moonless night;
> We make the grave our bed, and then are gone.
> Thus, at the shut of even, the weary bird
> Leaves the wide air, and in some lonely brake
> Cowers down, and dozes till the dawn of day,
> Then claps his well-fledged wings, and bears away.

We cannot read Blair without regretting that the solemn poets of his time drew so seldom upon the old dramatists, who might at least have quickened their Muse, instead of on Milton, in whose air they could not breathe for more than a few moments at a time. Blair, like Young, though in a far less degree, helped to disseminate these gloomy emotions. It has been pointed out that 'la poésie nocturne [1] et sépulcrale anglaise passe par un maximum,' 'vers 1758-1759'; for by that time Gray's *Elegy*, as well as James Hervey's pompous prose *Meditations*, had swelled the stream.

XX

Of the middle kind of poetry which celebrates the open-air life of the Briton, and does not aim at the high style except in a serio-comic spirit, there are few examples in this period more agreeable than the *Chase* of William Somervile (1675-1742). The work appeared in 1735, in the wake of the *Seasons*; and Somervile follows Thomson devoutly in his adoption of the Miltonic language and verse, and also in his affection for the country. But he is never very serious except in the matter of hunting. He is chiefly concerned with scenery as a background for the pursuit of the hare, the fox, the stag, and the otter; he also draws on books for his accounts of the chase of the elephant, the lion, and the tiger, as conducted by the great Mogul. In his English scene Somervile writes of what he knows, with much accuracy and animation, and has won the regard of sportsmen as well as of other critics. He is minute in his particulars, like

another Warwickshire man who in *Venus and Adonis* describes the points of a horse ; his picture of a mad dog,

> like some angry boar
> Churning he foams ; and on his back erect
> His pointed bristles rise ; his tail incurved
> He drops, and with harsh broken howlings rends
> The poison-tainted air,

has the same sort of realism. But he can also rise into sympathetic poetry :

> then to the copse,
> Thick with entangling grass or prickly furze,
> With silence lead thy many-coloured hounds
> In all their beauty's pride ;

and he writes with feeling of an old friend :

> Now grown stiff with age
> And many a painful chase, the wise old hound,
> Regardless of the frolic pack, attends
> His master's side, or slumbers at his ease
> Beneath the bending shade ; there many a ring
> Runs o'er in dreams.

Somervile portrays with some honest compassion the miseries of the quarry, the hare or the ' blown stag ' ; but we are far from the indignant strain of Blake or Cowper.

He wrote his piece after a lifetime of hunting, in order to renew his youthful memories ; and he explains himself in a spirited preface :

> The old and infirm have at least this privilege, that they can recall to their minds those scenes of joy in which they once delighted, and ruminate over their past pleasures, with a satisfaction almost equal to the first enjoyment. . . . The amusements of our youth are the boast and comfort of our declining years.

And he quotes the passage in the *Æneid*, where the heroes in the shades wrestle for their pleasure on the yellow sand. He discourses on the antiquity and ubiquity of the sport, and ends :

> But I have done. I know the impatience of my brethren, when a fine day, and the concert of the kennel, invite them abroad.

He is said to have hunted to the last, though low in his fortunes ; being somewhat free with his money, and also with the bottle. His friend the refined Shenstone said that ' he drank himself into pains of the body, to kill those of the mind.' He also wrote poems on *Field Sports*, and on village games, and turned out many fables, Hudibrastic rhymes, and songs. They yield us

little, unless we except the noble lyric on ' presenting to a lady a white rose and a red on the tenth of June.' There is also an excellent *Hunting Song*, which contains another description of the kill :

> Now puss threads the brakes, and heavily flies ;
> At the head of the pack
> Old Fidler bears the bell ;
> Every foil he hunts back
> And aloud rings her knell,
> Till, forced into view, she pants and she dies.

The literary parentage of Somervile is plain enough, and, like his performance, it raises no problems. He has something of his own to say, and, like his fellows, he thinks it better fun not to say it too plainly, but to draw, in an obvious way, on the *Georgics*, on Milton and on the *Seasons* ; using the heroic style, without any high-flying burlesque, in order to bring out his own delight in the chase. Like Anthony Trollope, he cannot keep away from it ; and his motto is that of Shakespeare's Theseus, ' never did I hear such gallant chiding.'

XXI

There is little nourishment in Christopher Smart's *Hop-Garden*, or in the *Sugar-Cane* (1764) of the amiable Dr. James Grainger, with its literal record of industry in the West Indies. Grainger's *Ode to Solitude*, with its ' upland airy shades ' and its light octosyllabics, is his best piece, though marred by some painful rhetoric. But of all those who produced long unrhymed poems between the *Seasons* and the *Task*, Dr. John Armstrong (1709-1779) has least met with his deserts. His chief works are the *Art of Preserving Health* (1744) ; the rhymed satire *Taste* (1753) ; and some *Prose Sketches or Essays on Various Subjects*, ' by Launcelot Temple, Esq.', printed in the same year. In his youth Armstrong had published a medical-erotic production called the *Œconomy of Love*, which he reissued later in a tempered form. Another satire, *A Day*, led to a quarrel with Wilkes. As a boy, Armstrong had amused himself with concocting some *Imitations* of Shakespeare, which at any rate foreshadow his unusual instinct for the cadence of blank verse ; and this, as well as a nervous grasp of language, is well seen in his *Art of Preserving Health*. This title, like those of the several books on ' diet,' on the ' passions,' and the like, cannot be called alluring ; but the result is strangely pleasant. Like his fellows, Armstrong tries to lower the heroic diction to a manner that is half-serious

and half-parody. But he does not ape the higher strain of Milton, and he almost escapes the common fault of abruptly 'clanging to' his period. If the advice to avoid heavy suppers is to be made poetical, it could hardly be better worded :

> But would you sweetly waste the blank of night
> In deep oblivion ; or on fancy's wings
> Visit the paradise of happy dreams,
> And waken cheerful as the lively morn ;
> Oppress not nature sinking down to rest
> With feasts too late, too solid, or too full.

In the advice upon building a house the poetry is more audible ;

> But may no fogs, from lake or fenny plain,
> Involve my hill. And wheresoe'er you build ;
> Whether on sunburnt Epsom, or the plains
> Washed by the silent Lee ; in Chelsea low,
> Or high Blackheath with wintry winds assailed ;
> Dry be your house ; but airy more than warm.
> Else every breath of ruder wind will strike
> Your tender body through with rapid pains ;
> Fierce coughs will tease you, hoarseness bind your voice,
> Or moist Gravedo load your aching brows.
> These to defy, and all the fates that dwell
> In cloistered air tainted with steaming life,
> Let lofty ceilings grace your ample rooms ;
> And still at azure noontide may your dome
> At every window drink the liquid sky.

Armstrong also gives edifying counsel to the young toper, telling him to learn only 'by slow degrees' to emulate the seasoned elder 'Centaurs,' for

> By slow degrees the liberal arts are won ;

and he is to indulge himself only with his friends and with 'men of generous mind.' Towards the close Armstrong proves that he can write, or could have written, in earnest, and his rhythm becomes stronger :

> There is, they say (and I believe there is),
> A spark within us of the immortal fire,
> That animates and moulds the grosser frame ;
> And when the body sinks, escapes to heaven,
> Its native seat ; and mixes with the Gods.
> Meanwhile this heavenly particle pervades
> The mortal elements, in every nerve
> It thrills with pleasure, or goes mad with pain.
> And, in its secret conclave, as it feels
> The body's woes and joys, this ruling power
> Wields at its will the dull material world,
> And is the body's health or malady.

Is not this sounder writing than much of the *Essay on Man*, or than the abstract passages in the *Seasons*?

Armstrong also moves with security in the familiar couplet. *Taste* is an epistle, directed not only against the pedant but the foppish critic who cries

> 'that ode of Prior
> Is Spenser quite! egad, 'tis very fine!
> As like—Yes, faith! as gum-flowers to the rose,
> Or as to Claret flat Minorca's dose!

This is a good epitaph on most of the Spenserian imitations of the day. Armstrong cordially admired Dryden, and his couplet, and also his triplet; did not see why Pope and his school should have banned the triplet; and catches something of Dryden's 'long-resounding pace' when he falls to praising a poet whom Dryden revered. A peevish friend, listening to Armstrong's censures upon his contemporaries, breaks out:

> 'You grow so squeamish and so devilish dry,
> You 'll call Lucretius vapid next.' Not I.
> Some find him tedious, others think him lame;
> But, if he lags, his subject is to blame.
> Rough weary roads through barren wilds he tried,
> Yet still he marches with true Roman pride:
> Sometimes a meteor, gorgeous, rapid, bright,
> He streams across the plilosophic night.

This sure eye for literature is also found in Armstrong's essays and 'sentences,' or *pensées*. He states the creed of the age of Anne and George the First as well as anybody; and this, too, at a moment when Latinism and elaboration had begun to assert themselves in our prose. Goldsmith might well have signed some of his maxims; and Armstrong, in his own writing, is not false to their teaching.

'To write obscurely requires no other talent or skill than to express one's meaning imperfectly.'—'Good taste is nothing else but genius without the power of execution.'—'In the most stupid ages there is more good taste than one would at first sight imagine.'—'The best language is strong and expressive, without stiffness or affectation; short and concise, without being either obscure or ambiguous; and easy and flowing and disengaged, without one undetermined or superfluous word.'

But he also sees the risks of the Addisonian manner; and a perusal of the periodical essays of his time will give point to his criticisms:

That writing can never be very good which is not easy; but it does not follow that all easy writing is good. Writing may be very

easy and yet, heaven knows, very insipid. And when you begin to suspect that your writing is easy indeed but wants spirit, the wisest thing you can do is to let your pen drop and go to bed.

Insipidity and want of spirit—want of *race*—were just the perils of average Georgian prose. Latinism and the sounding period represent an effort to regain strength, emphasis, and savour. But it was Goldsmith and some of the novelists who really recovered these qualities for prose, without loss of simplicity and ease.

XXII

Posterity is apt to brush aside the claims of a tantalising, intermittent poet like Mark Akenside,[1] or Akinside (1721-1750), the physician who is so roughly caricatured in *Peregrine Pickle*, but whom Christopher Smart, in one of his *Fables*, styles 'Athenian Akenside.' His historical position is plainer. He came early into note, in 1744, with his *Epistle to Curio*, a rhymed satire at the expense of William Pulteney, now Earl of Bath; and won still more reputation, in the same year, by his long discourse in blank verse on the *Pleasures of the Imagination*. Would he one day wear the mantle, it might have been asked, of Pope, or that of Thomson? But Akenside struck yet another vein, and in the next year published a sheaf of *Odes*. They were the most finished, in the 'Horatian' form, that had yet appeared; for they were earlier in print than the odes of Collins, of Joseph Warton, or of Gray. In 1746 Akenside wrote his *Hymn to the Naiads*, to be published in 1758 in Dodsley's *Collection*; and it was there accompanied by some *Inscriptions*, which perhaps reveal the most delicate side of his talent. He divided the rest of his days between the practice of his profession and the incessant revision of his poems; but otherwise wrote little fresh verse of interest. He earned a reputation for medical lore, and published professional monographs. Akenside is said to have had an irritable temper, and even a strain of brutality in his composition; his portrait shows a strange receding face, with large, wide-opened eyes, and wears a somewhat arrogant expression. We hear that he 'evinced a particular disgust to females,' and also that he

> had a pale strumous countenance, but was always very neat and elegant in his dress. He wore a large white wig, and carried a long sword.

All this sits oddly upon a Hellenist and idealist, with a turn for metaphysical verse; and no doubt Akenside was the natural

prey of Smollett in *Peregrine Pickle*. Nature has a strong sense of humour, and houses her gifts in queer receptacles. But these peculiarities do not come out in Akenside's poetry. He evidently had character as well as talent; and, by some gift of the gods, he gained a devoted friend, one Jeremiah Dyson, who not only admired but actually endowed him, and who edited his literary remains.

The *Epistle to Curio* is a reproachful lament over a fallen idol. Like so many of the poets, Akenside had joined the ranks of the 'patriots' who banded against Walpole and pinned their hopes on Pulteney. When Sir Robert fell in 1742, Pulteney, instead of stepping in to sweep away corruption, went to the Lords as Earl of Bath, and, to the indignation of his votaries, swept away nothing. Akenside, however, does not rage or rail like the rest; he measures the lapse of the lost leader by his former virtues, and finds that, alas! even upon these his apostasy has cast a doubt. There are pathos and dignity in the complaint; although Macaulay, in his drumming loud language, derides the illusions of the youthful poet. And Macaulay praises the style of the *Epistle*, even to excess; yet it is somewhat disappointing; and despite the energy and sincerity of Akenside's emotion, his couplets seldom bite upon the mind. The work was at least as popular as *London*, which had appeared six years before, but cannot compare with it in power or in distinctness.

The *Pleasures of Imagination* is full of poetic scholarship, and is yet another endeavour to appropriate, this time for a philosophic theme, the style and versification of Milton. This, when we are looking for poetry, may seem fatally faint praise. But there is poetry too, if only we will look for it, and poetry of a prophetic kind. Akenside's theory is founded on those papers of Addison in the *Spectator* (nos. 411-21) which form his best contribution to criticism, and of which the sources[1] are not yet fully explored. Addison, certainly, draws on the current psychology of Locke; but he goes beyond Locke, and embroiders that positive-minded thinker with fancies and conceptions of his own. One of the happiest of his additions, which is missed by Akenside, is a picture of the woefulness of a newly disembodied spirit, wandering in a world devoid of colour and of those other 'secondary qualities' which, in Locke's view, do not exist in nature but are contributed from within. Akenside duly and elaborately traces the pleasures of the imagination to the three sources of grandeur, novelty, and beauty. But he is more interesting when he allows his own imagination to get to work, and sets down his intimate recollections. Sometimes we

rub our eyes and seem to be reading one of the 'passages in the *Prelude*, where that faculty 'gently leads us on'; and here, surely, was a new and peculiar strain in English poetry, and one with a future before it. Like the passage already quoted (p. 359, *ante*) from Thomson, it shows that the idea of the 'education of nature' was already in the air, not as a dogma, but as a poetic impulse.

> So the glad impulse of congenial powers,
> Or of sweet sound, or fair-proportioned form,
> The grace of motion, or the bloom of light,
> Thrills through Imagination's tender frame,
> From nerve to nerve . . .
> Fancy dreams
> Of sacred fountains and Elysian groves,
> And vales of bliss; the intellectual power
> Bends from his awful throne a wondering ear,
> And smiles; the passions, gently soothed away,
> Sink to divine repose, and love and joy
> Alone are waking; love and joy, serene
> As airs that fan the summer.

These lines occur in the first version of Akenside's poem; and a still closer likeness to Wordsworth has been noticed in the revised version (1770) of the fourth book:

> O ye Northumbrian shades, which overlook
> The rocky pavement and the mossy fells
> Of solitary Wensbeck's limpid stream;
> How gladly I recall your well-known seats,
> Beloved of old, and that delightful time
> When, all alone, for many a summer's day,
> I wandered through your calm recesses, led
> In silence by some powerful hand unseen.

There is not much of this quality in the *Pleasures of Imagination*, which suffers as a whole from indistinctness and monotony. The verse, as in the *Hymn to the Naiads*, is studiously broken up and varied; but it often falls into that familiar movement, like the swaying of a letter-scales, which seems to call out for the missing rhyme:

> Cheers his long labour, and renews his frame.

Sooner or later those who speak of Akenside bring out the fatal word *coldness*, and it is hard to escape from it. But it by no means disposes of his poetry, or explains our compunction at not liking him better, or oftener. The vital flame, if it may burn low, never goes quite out—we feel that one more drop of the sacred oil would make it bright. There are lines and cadences for the like of which we turn over in vain many a page of

Dodsley's or Pearch's *Collections*. Akenside's instinct for beauty comes out unalloyed in the first of his *Inscriptions*:

> To me, whom in their lays the shepherds call
> Actæa, daughter of the neighbouring stream,
> This cave belongs . . .

a little Hellenic of eighteen lines that might well be mistaken, in its grace and classic elegance, for one of Walter Savage Landor's. Akenside is at his best when he is short. The *Hymn to the Naiads* is a striking exercise, considering its date; it is charged with memories of Hesiod and Milton; the one providing the lineage of the Naiads, and the other a model for the management of the musical names, *Amalthea*, *Bandusia*, *Daphne*. It is unlucky that Akenside should be moved to 'conduct,' as he puts it, the 'English merchant' past the 'towers of Memphis, or the palms By sacred Ganges watered.' There is too much Britannia-metal here; and Akenside's poetic flashes come most thickly not in his blank-verse pieces but in his odes.

XXIII

These are in many measures, and, like Horace's, are laid out into 'books' and numbered. Some are in regular 'Pindaric' form, but most are in short lines and rather short stanzas. The planless ode, which we associate with Cowley, is not used at all. Akenside's feeling for structure and restraint is almost as strict as Gray's; but this, though a cardinal virtue, is not enough to make a poem. 'The author,' he says, 'pretends chiefly to the virtue of being correct, and of carefully attending to the best models.' Yet who can doubt the sureness of poetic phrase in

> Tonight retired, the queen of heaven
> For young Endymion stays,

or in

> the piercing lights that fly
> From the dark heaven of Myrto's eye,

or in the often-quoted verse, from the lines *On Leaving Holland*,

> O my loved England, when with thee
> Shall I sit down, to part no more,
> Far from this pale, discoloured sea,
> That sleeps upon the reedy shore?

Perhaps Akenside sustains himself better on the humbler levels of ironic or satirical verse, than when he aims high. While a boy, he had produced a pleasing skit on the *Virtuoso*, a figure who also served as a butt for Dr. Johnson. In the ode *On Affected Indifference* the dismissed lover vainly tries to slight

and disconcert his lady as he crosses her in her walk; but he has to exclaim, addressing himself:

> Whence do your cheeks indignant glow?
> Why is your struggling tongue so slow?
> What means that darkness on your brow?
> As if with all her broken vow
> You meant the fair apostate to upbraid?

This is in the good tradition; and there is also a neat scornful lyric directed at Bishop Warburton, whose saurian hide it may or may not have pierced. It is addressed to Thomas Edwards, who in his *Canons of Criticism* had scathed that ecclesiastic for his dealings with the text of Shakespeare. Warburton had formerly assailed Akenside for some supposed offence. The poet keeps his temper, and makes his point on Warburton's edition:

> Then Shakespeare, debonair and mild,
> Brought that strange comment forth to view;
> Conceits more deep, he said, and wild,
> Than his own fools or madmen knew.

It is a pity that Akenside, in his poetry, was not more often himself, and that he spent so much time on a revision which often makes the result tamer if more finished. Few poets have made such ruthless use of the melting-pot. He recast many of his odes; he turned the *Epistle to Curio* into Spenserian stanzas of a rhetorical cast; and the *Pleasures of Imagination* he rewrote at least twice. A second edition appeared in 1760, and yet another, an incomplete one, was published after his death by the faithful Jeremiah Dyson. Lines, phrases, and passages were thriftily saved up and used; others were dropt: and long sections were added, some of which, it must be admitted, show a rekindling of power. But Akenside's service was to burnish certain poetical forms which others were to animate; and, even during his lifetime, Collins and Gray, who possibly owed something to his example, had written their odes and done their work. They had no unworthy forerunner in the man who could write:

> But thou, my lyre, awake, arise,
> And hail the sun's returning force;
> Even now he climbs the northern skies,
> And health and hope attend his course.
> Then, louder howl the aërial waste,
> Be earth with keener cold embraced,
> Yet gentle hours advance their wing;
> And Fancy, mocking Winter's night,
> With flowers and dews and streaming light
> Already decks the new-born Spring.

NOTES

C.E.L. . . . . Cambridge History of English Literature.
D.N.B. . . . . Dictionary of National Biography.
E.B. . . . . Encyclopædia Britannica, eleventh edition.
E.M.L. . . . 'English Men of Letters' Series.
N.E.D. . . . New English Dictionary.
P.M.L.A. . . Publications of the Modern Language Association of America.
R.E.S. . . . . Review of English Studies.
T.L.S. . . . . *Times* Literary Supplement.

p. 8, note 1. **Chesterfield.** *Life*, by W. Ernst [Ernst-Browning], 1893, 1906; by W. H. Craig, 1907; and see R. Coxon, *C. and his Critics*, 1925 (especially pp. 291 ff., on the edd. of the letters). *Misc. Works*, ed. M. Maty, four vols., 1777-9; *Letters and Works*, ed. Lord Mahon, five vols., 1845. *Letters to his Son*, many edd.; that by C. Strachey and Annette Calthrop, two vols., 1901, is complete; see also J. Bradshaw's, three vols., 1892. *Letters to his Godson*, ed. Lord Carnarvon, 1890; *Letters to Lord Huntingdon*, ed. A. F. Steuart, 1923. No collected edn. yet of *all* letters. *Poet. Works*, 1927. Comment endless; but see Sainte-Beuve, *Causeries du Lundi*, June 24, 1850; also J. C. Collins, *Essays and Studies*, 1895. (The caricature 'Mr. Chester,' in *Barnaby Rudge*, is, of course, to be dismissed from the mind.)

p. 8, note 2. **Onslow.** In his memoir, *Hist. MSS. Commission Reports*, 1895, xiv., App., pt. ix. p. 472.

p. 8, note 3. **Johnson.** For fuller statement of the case see Strachey's ed. of *Letters*, vol. i. pp. lix-lxvi.

p. 9. **French historians.** See L. Cazamian in Legouis and Cazamian, *Hist. de la litt. anglaise*, 1924, pp. 875-6: 'figure toute française à bien des égards, proche de nous par des affinités, des préférences, écrivant notre langue aussi aisément que la sienne.'

p. 12. **Charlemont.** See his *Anecdotes* in Bradshaw's edn. of the *Letters*, i. xxv ff.

p. 15. **Lord Bristol.** *Letter-Books of John Hervey, first Earl of Bristol*, three vols., Wells, 1894 (edited by 'S. H. A. H.'). Some natural and moving letters by (Sir) Thomas Hervey, the Earl's father, written during courtship, are also included (and see App. iii., vol. iii., pp. 417-18).

p. 16, note 1. **'I cannot conceal . . .'** *Letter-Books*, iii. 181, no. 1054 (1737).

p. 16, note 2. **Hervey.** *Memoirs*, first ed. by J. W. Croker, three vols., 1848, 1884.

p. 16, note 3. **retired life.** *Letter-Books*, i. 331, no. 391 (1712).

p. 16, note 4. **Sporus.** Also styled by Pope Lord Fanny, Adonis, Narcissus, and Paris. For many allusions to Hervey see Elwin and Courthope's *Pope*, index, and vol. iii. App. iii.

p. 18, note 1. **Dodington.** *Diary*, ed. H. P. Wyndham, 1784; and in the series *Autobiography*, vol. xxii., 1828. H. Walpole, *Mems. of George II.*, ed. 1846, i. 441, describes the splendours of Eastbury ('a bed of purple, lined with orange, was crowned with a dome of peacock's feathers'); and elsewhere says that Dodington's speeches were 'dainty and pointed.' For derision, see Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, *Works*, 1822, i. 25, *A Grub upon Bub.* See too R. Cumberland, *Memoirs*, 1807, i. 180-194; and for the best sketch of Dodington generally, W. P. Courtney, *Dodsley's Collection*, 1910, pp. 84-98.

p. 18, note 2. **The Motion.** Reproduced and explained in T. Wright, *Caricature History of the Georges*, ed. 1904, pp. 127-130.

p. 19, note 1. **Perceval.** *Diary*, three vols., 1920-3, calendared by R. A. Roberts (Hist. MSS. Commission). See too B. Rand, *Berkeley and Perceval*, 1914 (contains letters of much interest, unpublished before). For still unpublished matter in B.M. see *T.L.S.*, Aug. 18, 1921. (Spelling of name varies.)

p. 19, note 2. **Wentworth Papers.** Ed. J. J. Cartwright, 1883 (1705-39, selected). For Ranby see pp. 532 ff.

p. 20, note 1. **Burke.** *On Conciliation with America*, 1775: 'Suppose, Sir . . . the world' (239 words).

p. 20, note 2. **Suffolk Correspondence.** *Letters to and from Henrietta, Countess of S., and her Second Husband, the Hon. G. B., from 1712 to 1767*, two vols., 1824 (anonymously and imperfectly edited by J. W. Croker). Lewis Melville, *Lady S. and her Circle*, 1924, weaves into a well-documented story many other letters from MS., of lively interest.

p. 20, note 3. **traditionally.** On this nice point, which I do not pretend to judge, see W. H. Grattan Flood in *T.L.S.*, March 19, 1925; who quotes a passage in the lady's favour from Egmont's *Diary*, Hist. MSS. Comm., ii. 133-4. It is not, however, cited as conclusive.

p. 21, note 1. **dialogues.** Melville, *op. cit.*, pp. 232-8.

p. 21, note 2. **Chatham.** Basil Williams, *Life of C.*, two vols., 1913, i. 190-217, describes his literary circle (Gilbert West, Shenstone, Lyttelton, Mrs. Montagu, etc.; his house and 'Arcadian' garden at South Lodge, and his taste for scenery (of Ilam in Derbyshire he said, 'the ground rolls and tumbles finely here'). Other friends and admirers were Home (of *Douglas*), Garrick, and Fielding. Among his chosen authors were Plutarch, Shakespeare, Spenser, and Barrow. See too Lord Rosebery, *Chatham, his Early Life and Connexions*, 1910, for a picture of the brother and sister. *Love-Letters of W. P.*, ed. Mrs. E. A. Edwards, 1926. *Letters (1766-1786) of Lady Harriot Eliot*, ed. Cuthbert Headlam, 1914.

p. 21, note 3. **Chatham Correspondence.** Ed. W. Taylor and J. H. Pringle, four vols., 1838-1840.

p. 22. **Selwyn.** S. P. Kerr, *G. S. and the Wits*, 1909, adds to the matter collected by E. S. Roscoe and Helen Clergue, *G. S.*, 1899 (letters from those ed. by R. E. G. Kirk, 1897, App. to 15th *Report* of Hist. MSS. Commission). See too J. H. Jesse, *G. S. and his Contemporaries*, four vols., 1843-4, 1882.

p. 23, note 1. **Voltaire and 'bore.'** In letter to G. Keate, April 16, 1760, quoted from MS. by A. Ballantyne, *V.'s Visit to England*, 1893, p. 278. Cp. G. Selwyn, Jan. 5, 1768, 'Can you forgive these borish letters?' (E. S. Roscoe, *G. S.*, 1899, p. 38; and quotation (1783) from Lady Harriot Eliot in text, p. 22. See too *N.E.D.*, *s.v.*, for other reff., and for the odd history of the word, which 'arose about 1750; etymology unknown.'

p. 23, note 2. **Walpole.** Austin Dobson, *H. W., a Memoir*, 1890 (a classic revised to date by Paget Toynbee, 1927); Paul Yvon, *H. W.*, 1924, a valuable long monograph; Dorothy M. Stuart, *H. W.*, 1927 (*E.M.L.*), a close and sympathetic study. *Works*, five vols., 1798, ed. Mary Berry (for dates and issues of political memoirs not there included, see *C.E.L.*, x. 495; and for *full* text of *Reminiscences* (of 1788), P. Toynbee's edn., 1924). The same editor, in *Times*, Aug. 16, 1924, described the MS. of Walpole's journals of his visits to Paris. *Letters*, standard edn. by Mrs. Paget Toynbee, sixteen vols., 1903-5 (with three supplementary by P. Toynbee, 1918-25); also her edn., three vols., 1912, of Mme du Deffand's *Lettres* to Walpole. *Selected Letters*, ed. W. S. Lewis, two vols., 1926. Comment, endless; but see, besides the above, H. B. Wheatley in *C.E.L.*, vol. x., 1913; Alice D. Greenwood, *H. W.'s World*, 1913; also W. P. Ker in Craik's *English Prose Selections*, iv. 233 (1894), for some corrective to Macaulay's essay (1833).

p. 27. **Strawberry Hill.** For detail see A. Dobson, *op. cit.*; P. Toynbee, *Journal of the Printing-Press at S. H.*, 1923; and *S. H. Accounts*, 1927.

p. 28. **Mme du Deffand.** For the epithets, and for a delicate account of this relationship, see Dorothy Stuart, *H. W.*, pp. 171-5.

p. 33. **Mysterious Mother** and **Castle of Otranto.** Ed. Montague Summers, with full apparatus, 1924; and, on the tragedy, Paul Yvon, *H. W. as a Poet*, 1924, pp. 160-201.

p. 34. **tale of terror.** Alice M. Killen, *Le roman 'terrifiant' ou roman noir*, Paris, 1915 (down to Mrs. Radcliffe; especially on the influence in France); Edith Birkhead, *The Tale of Terror*, 1921 (carries the record down through the nineteenth century); Eino Railo, *The Haunted Castle*, 1927 (from the Finnish; an elaborate study). See too *Surrey, 1780-1830* (1912), vol. i. ch. vii.

p. 35, note 1. **Hieroglyphic Tales.** Reprinted, 1926, in full (with Walpole's MS. notes found in a B.M. copy). Six copies were printed at Strawberry Hill in 1785; the work was partially reproduced in the 1798 edn.

p. 35, note 2. **light literature.** See Dorothy Stuart, *H. W.*, *passim*, for many more instances than my text will accommodate.

p. 37, note 1. **gallicisms.** For a list see Paul Yvon, *H. W.*, pp. 851 ff.

p. 37, note 2. **Dilettanti.** See Lionel Cust, *Hist. of the Society of the D.*, 1898, 1914, ed. Sir Sidney Colvin. This long-living institution, which began about 1732 for festive purposes, grew into an organisation for financing and encouraging the study of classical antiquities. For some results, see note below on Stuart and Chandler. Reynolds, Garrick, and C. J. Fox became members; there were 'regalia,' the president in a 'scarlet toga,' etc. See Sir M. E. Grant-Duff, *Out of the Past*, two vols., 1903, i. 157 ff.

p. 37, note 3. **rhymes.** See Paul Yvon, *H. W. as a Poet*, Paris, 1924, for a full (and perhaps too indulgent) account of these. Walpole is the author of

the lines (they used to figure in the 'doubtful poems' of Gray, who merely copied them out) beginning 'Seeds of poetry and rhyme,' signed by his coterie-name of 'Celadon.' See *Corr. of Gray, Walpole*, etc., ed. P. Toynbee, two vols., 1915, i. 118-21.

p. 38. **diaries.** See Arthur Ponsonby, *English Diaries*, 1923 (sketches and extracts): 29 of them from the eighteenth century, including Turner, Gale, Thomlinson, and Rutty: others from MSS. (*e.g.* Mrs. Browne, 1754-7, who went with Braddock to Virginia). Also the same researcher's *More English Diaries*, 1927 (five from this period; see especially that of the Rev. William Jones of Broxbourne). Also his *Scottish and Irish Diaries*, 1927 (*e.g.* G. Ridpath's, 1755-71; and Lady Arabella Denny's, 1751: both from MSS.).

p. 39. **Turner.** *Diary*, ed. F. M. Turner (Mrs. Charles Lamb), 1925; and in *Sussex Archæol. Collections*, 1859, xi. 179 ff.

p. 40, note 1. **Gale.** *Diary* in *Sussex Arch. Coll.*, 1857, vol. ix. For the list of books, see p. 196 (1751).

p. 40, note 2. **Thomlinson.** In *Surtees Society Publications*, vol. cxviii., 1910 (*North Country Diaries*). A good story of Butler (Nov. 11, 1717) is to be found on p. 91. The same vol. includes the *Diary* of Thomas Gyll, latterly Recorder of Durham; he describes the reception of the new bishop, Joseph Butler, in 1751 (p. 187); but most of his entries are dry.

p. 41. **Woodforde.** *Diary of a Country Parson, the Revd. J. W.*, ed. John Beresford; three vols., 1924-7.

p. 42. **Lackington.** I have used the third and enlarged edition, 1793, of the *Memoirs*. See 'George Paston,' *Little Memoirs of the XVIIIth Century*, 1901.

p. 44. **Hickey.** *Memoirs of W. H.*, ed. Alfred Spencer, four vols., 1913-25. The fortunes of the MS. and the evidence for its genuineness are set out in the preface to vol. iv. See too Maurice Amos, *W. H.*, in *London Mercury*, Sept. 1926.

p. 45. **Macdonald's Travels.** A rare book, reprinted as *Memoirs of an Eighteenth-Century Footman*, 1927, with introd. by John Beresford.

p. 46. **Samuel Kelly.** *Journal*, ed. Crosbie Garstin, 1925.

p. 48, note 1. **scholars.** See note above on the 'Dilettanti,' who prompted and supported these expeditions. The *Antiquities of Athens*, four vols., 1762, etc., of Stuart and the draughtsman-architect Nicholas Revett, deeply affected English taste by its plates, descriptions, etc., but is not in literary form. Chandler's *Travels in Asia Minor*, 1775, and *Travels in Greece*, 1776, are a most readable journal, showing a love of nature and an eye for humours; but are mainly, according to his instructions, a scholar's report: he discounts the poets' accounts of the '"amber waves" of the muddy Maeander, and the "hanging woods" on the bare steep of Delphi.' The scientific record is in his and Revett's) *Ionian Antiquities*, three vols., 1769, with their splendid plates.

p. 48, note 2. **explorers.** Anson, Byron, Wallis, Carteret, in Robert Kerr, *Gen. Hist. and Coll. of Voyages and Travels*, 18 vols., 1811-1824, vols. xi., xii. (largely from J. Hawkesworth, *Account of Voyages*, etc., three vols., 1773). In vol. xvii. is Byron's *Narrative*, also John Bulkeley's and John Cummins's vivid *Narrative* of the loss of the *Wager*.

p. 48, note 3. **privateers.** I have left no room for them, not even for George Shelvocke, who published in 1726 his *Voyage Round the World* (of 1719-22), and who supplied an albatross to the *Ancient Mariner*. The most entertaining of these chroniclers that I have found is Commodore George Walker, whose *Voyages and Cruises*, two vols., 1760, are penned under his supervision (while in prison) by a friend unnamed. Walker's power of 'bluff' is notable; clothing handspikes as dummy mariners, mounting wooden guns, etc. There was said to be a ghost aboard; so W. made a real man dress up as the female ghost, and then explain himself, in order to calm the crew. *Voyages and Cruises of Commodore Walker*, fully ed. by H. S. Vaughan, 1928.

p. 48, note 4. **Walter.** Claims, not usually accepted, were also put forward for the mathematician Benjamin Robins, who was not on the voyage; see Kerr, xi. 527 ff.

p. 50. **Cook.** Arthur Kitson, *Captain J. C.*, 1907 (superseding Andrew Kippis, *Life*, 1788). *Journal during his First Voyage*, ed. W. J. L. Wharton, 1893 (Hawkesworth's medley in Kerr, vols. xii., xiii.). Second and third voyages in Kerr, xiv.-xvii. (including King's sequel, but omitting large maps, etc.). For other original literature see *D.N.B.* (J. K. Laughton). *Journal of Sir Joseph Banks* (on first voyage), ed. Sir Joseph D. Hooker, 1896.

p. 52, note 1. **George Forster.** His *Voyage round the World*, etc., two large vols., 1777, embodies the notes of his father, so evading the prohibition on Johann Reinhold against writing the story. For this dispute see Kitson, pp. 235 ff.; the Forsters were cantankerous persons, but their scientific notes were of value. G. F. is not to be confused with another G. F. (died 1792), the Indian traveller (see *D.N.B.* on all concerned); his later career was distinguished, and he figures in German literature; and his English, though florid, is remarkable for a foreigner.

p. 52, note 2. **Alexander Carlyle.** *Autobiography*, ed. J. H. Burton (with supplementary chapter), 1910; first in 1860.

p. 56. **Caroline.** For some of the material, see W. Coxe, *Mems.*, etc., *of Sir R. Walpole*, three vols., 1798, i. 276 ff., 550 ff.; for correspondence with Leibniz, J. M. Kemble, *State Papers*, 1857, pp. 528 ff., 538 (1715-16); also *Sackville Papers* (Hist. MSS. Commission), 1904, i. 148 ff.; and reff. in Sir A. W. Ward's article in *D.N.B.* For fuller general accounts see the attractive *Lives of the Hanoverian Queens of England*, by Miss A. D. Greenwood, two vols., 1909-11, i. 141-419; also W. H. Wilkins, *Caroline the Illustrious*, 1901. I am also obliged, for several references, to an unpublished thesis by Miss Marjorie Lindley, M.A. There is room for a brief monograph upon Caroline's literary and theological connexions.

p. 57. **Whiston.** See *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of W. W.*, by himself, 1748: on Wollaston, second ed., 1753, p. 198. It is a tedious work, with some vivid interludes well told: see pp. 271 ff. for Whiston's courageous dealing with the debauched Earl of Essex. See Nichols, *Lit. Anecdotes*, i. 504, for other stories. Whiston (1667-1752) really belongs to the last age, and hardly to literature. His *Memoirs* of Samuel Clarke (1730) are of interest.

p. 58, note 1. **Lady Sundon.** *The Memoirs of Viscountess Sundon*, ed. Mrs. A. T. Thomson, two vols., 1847, include many letters and petitions addressed to her (not her replies). For references to Berkeley, see ii. 165 ff.; to

Savage, ii. 241 ff.; to Steele, i. 58. The title 'Viscountess' is inaccurate. See L. Melville, *Lady Suffolk and her Circle*, 1924, pp. 41-3.

p. 58, note 2. **Frederick.** Henry Curties, *A Forgotten Prince of Wales*, (1912), gives some useful information.

p. 59. **Nugent.** See *Memoir*, by Claude Nugent, 1898, with his letters and verses. This unstable personage, who rose to high office, was a not unskilful rhymer. His best ode, addressed to Pulteney (who was to 'prop a nation's frame'), was thought to be too good for Nugent, and to have been written or improved by David Mallet. The writer, we hear, had in the Church of Rome 'drunk Error's poisoned springs'; but Hooker, and then Locke, had 'spread the realms of day,' Plato and Sidney finishing the process. The seventeen *Epigrams*, and some light lyrics, are Nugent's most satisfactory efforts. Horace Walpole coined the word to 'Nugentize' for the habit of marrying rich widows. But Nugent, as Viscount Clare, was the friend and host of Goldsmith, who inscribes to him the *Haunch of Venison* (see A. Dobson, *Poems of O. G.*, 'World's Classics,' pp. 238-9).

p. 60. **Lady Mary.** *Letters and Works*, ed. W. Moy Thomas (based on Lord Wharncliffe's edn.), two vols., 1861, 1893. A. R. Ropes, *Lady M. W. M.* (selections), 1892. For comment, see, above all, W. Bagehot's essay (1862), in his *Literary Studies*; and 'G. Paston,' *Lady M. W. M. and her Times*, 1907; also L. Melville, *Lady M. W. M.*, 1925. Iris Barry, *Portrait of Lady M. W. M.*, 1928. (The letters from the East were first published surreptitiously, three vols., 1763.)

p. 65. **Lady Hertford and Lady Pomfret.** *Corr.*, ed. W. Bingley, three vols., 1805. And see 'George Paston,' *Little Memoirs of the XVIIIth Century*, 1901, pp. 3-53 (with some unpublished matter).

p. 67. **Duchess of Northumberland.** See *The Diaries of a Duchess*, ed. James Greig, 1926. Other passages of interest are on Oxford (pp. 2-4); on the arrival of Clive, with 'mahogany' complexion (p. 12); on a storm in the Channel (p. 100), where she is nearly crushed and drowned; and the long list (pp. 206-7) of London places of entertainment.

p. 68. **Lady Mary Coke.** *Letters and Journals*, privately printed, four vols., 1889-96, ed. J. A. Home. Vol. i. includes Lady Louisa Stuart's *Memoir*, written in 1827 and first printed in 1863, which calls loudly to be reprinted now in an accessible form. Vol. iii. contains some letters from Horace Walpole. For the Adam Smith tale, see i. 141; on Mme de Sévigné, iii. 224 (1770); and for the Cardinal, iv. 243. The *Letters* of Lady *Jane* Coke, (1706-61), sister of the notorious Philip, Duke of Wharton, and wife of Robert Coke, brother of the first Earl of Leicester, have also been published (1899, ed. Mrs. A. Rathbone); they are brief and simple, and are named to prevent any confusion. Lady Jane, says the editor, is thought to haunt Longford Hall, Derbyshire, 'looking for a lost finger of her left hand.'

p. 70. **Lady Sarah Lennox.** *Life and Letters*, ed. Lady Ilchester and Lord Stavordale, two vols., 1901.

p. 71. **Mrs. Delany.** *Autobiography and Corr.*, ed. Lady Llanover, six vols. (two series), 1861-2. 'George Paston,' *Mrs. D. (Mary Granville), a Memoir*, 1900. R. Brimley Johnson, *Mrs. D. at Court and among the Wits*, 1925, gives a good selection from the letters, a biographical table, a note on the

Flora in 'paper mosaic' now in the B.M., and pictures of Mrs. Delany's handiwork.

p. 72. **'Bluestockings.'** For the various theories, see *D.N.B.*, under Mrs. Montagu; and, for the whole group, and typical extracts, R. Brimley Johnson, *Bluestocking Letters*, 1926. Some are included, unpublished before, from Mrs. Vesey, the 'sylph.' The sylph is mobile, but rather breathless; but she left a tradition of grace and airy charm. Mrs. Boscawen, the wife of the Admiral, was another leading lady. See Ethel R. Wheeler, *Famous Bluestockings*, 1910 (on Mrs. Vesey, pp. 157-177).

p. 73. **Mrs. Carter.** (1) *Memoirs*, with her verses and essays, etc., two vols., 1808. (2) *Letters*, to and from Miss Talbot, and to Mrs. Vesey, four vols., 1809. (3) Ditto, to Mrs. Montagu, three vols., 1817. All these were edited by Mrs. Carter's nephew and executor, the Rev. M. Pennington. See too Alice C. C. Gaussen, *A Woman of Wit and Wisdom, Memoir of E. C.*, 1906.

p. 78. **Mrs. Montagu.** Mrs. E. J. Climenson, *E. M., the Queen of the Bluestockings*, two vols., 1906, gives, besides biography, selections from the letters down to 1761; and the work is well carried on down to Mrs. Montagu's death by Reginald Blunt, *Mrs. M.*, '*Queen of the Blues*,' two vols. [1923]. R. Huchon, *Mrs. M., 1720-1800*, 1907, in spite of not having all Mr. Blunt's material, gives an excellent *causerie* portrait, with a full account (*q.v.*) of the *Essay* and the strife with Voltaire. There is an earlier sketch by John Doran, *A Lady of the Last Century* (*Mrs. E. M.*), 1873; and many letters were printed by Matthew Montagu in four vols., 1809-13.

p. 81. **Lady Miller.** See Ruth A. Hesselgrave, *Lady M. and the Batheaston Literary Circle*, Yale, 1927: a fully-documented account, with picture of the vase, and many samples of the verses. I will confess that these were enough, and that I have not seen the *Poetical Amusements*, but have relied on Miss Hesselgrave's pleasing sketch.

p. 82, note 1. **Anna Seward.** See E. V. Lucas, *A Swan and her Friends*, 1907.

p. 82, note 2. **Jerningham.** See Lewis Bettany, *E. J. and his Friends*, 1919. Jerningham's own letters are flat; but those written *to* him (some of them first printed here) are of interest, for among the writers are Burke, Chesterfield, and Walpole. Chesterfield (1765, p. 41) remarks: 'I have truth and impudence enough to say, *Tu m'aduli ma tu mi piaci*.'

p. 82, note 3. **Miss Schaw.** *Journal of a Lady of Quality, 1774-1776*, ed. Evangeline W. Andrews and C. M. Andrews, 1921 (with full genealogical and historical notes, especially on the American side).

p. 83. **Mrs. Calderwood.** *Letters and Journals*, ed. Lt.-Col. A. Fergusson, 1884. See p. 216 for the tale of the servant John who confounded 'meal' with *miel* when seeking materials for a 'haggas' in France.

p. 85. **the essay.** See G. S. Marr, *Periodical Essayists of the XVIIIth Century* (1923), a history which gives many extracts from the obscurer sheets. The nine volumes, 1805-11, of Nathan Drake are still of value; the first five, *Essays Illustrative*, etc., giving the chronicle from the *Tatler* down to 1809; and the four vols. of the *Gleaner* rescue papers from journals *exclusive* of the principal ones. Drake certainly 'gleaned in the field until even,' and it is not his fault if the sheaves are lean. There is precious information in

the *Hope Catalogue*, 1865, of the great Hope collection in the Bodleian. The *World*, *Adventurer*, *Connoisseur*, *Mirror*, and *Lounger*, and Knox's essays, are in the familiar *British Essayists*.

p. 91. **zealots.** See A. D. Godley, *Oxford in the XVIIIth Century*, 1908, pp. 265 ff.: 'Oxford of that day was stony ground indeed; the mass of undergraduate opinion would have none of Methodism,' etc.

p. 92. **Johnson** (in the *Adventurer*). See L. F. Powell in *R.E.S.*, Oct. 1927, iii. 420-9, for proof that he wrote nos. 34, 41, 53, 62, signed 'Misargyrus' (two, at least, demonstrably); making twenty-seven of his contributions in all; for the specific numbers see *C.E.L.*, x. 466.

p. 97. **later essays.** I have tried, without result, to find anything worth naming in my text, in the following sheets (besides others): the *Scourge* (1771—a title of several different ventures); *Centinel* (1757); *Entertainer* (1754); *Rhapsodist* (1757); *Templar and Literary Gazette* (1773). The last-named, in no. 5, describes 'the vast increase of diurnals and nocturnals; Gazettes and Gazetteers; Papers and Packets; Mercuries and flying Posts; Courants and Chronicles; Museums and Magazines.' But, of course, there is salvage I have missed, and this whole ground is heavy travelling.

p. 98. **Goldsmith.** *Bibliography*, in *Camb. Eng. Lit.*, x. 480-4 (1913). *Life:* A. Dobson, 1888, 1899; and his contributions in *C.E.L.*, vol. x., and in *E.B.* Sir James Prior's *Life*, two vols., 1837, heavy but full of research, is supplanted with the public by John Forster's *Life and Times of O. G.*, 1848, final edn. 1877: laborious and enthusiastic, but written in a rather excited style little appropriate to Goldsmith. One of the chief early sources is the composite 'Percy Memoir,' as to which see Miss K. S. Balderston's important tracking of the origins, *Hist. and Sources of Percy's Memoir of G.*, 1926; also her *Census of the MSS. of O. G.*, 1926. Macaulay's classic sketch, 1856, and W. Black's *G.*, 1878, should be named. *Works:* standard edn. by J. W. M. Gibbs, five vols., 1885-6; there is interesting matter in Peter Cunningham's, four vols., 1854; and D. Masson's of the *Misc. Works*, 1868, etc. ('Globe'), is of value and convenient. Numberless edns. of single works; see especially all by Austin Dobson (some named below). Most of Goldsmith's translations, histories, and anthologies have ceased to be reprinted, and are not included in the above *Works*.

p. 100, note 1. **French.** See, on his probable learning of the language from the Ballymahon priests, A. L. Sells, *Les Sources françaises de G.*, Paris, 1924, p. 4: a comprehensive study, with many discoveries, which I use freely. Also *Study*, by Hamilton J. Smith, of the *Citizen of the World* (1926: much detail as to the 'sources,' and seemingly independent of Sells's work).

p. 100, note 2. **medical degree.** See Sir Ernest Clarke, *Medical Education and Qualifications of G.*, from *Proceedings of Royal Society of Medicine*, vii. 88-97, 1914; who suggests that the 'Bachelor of Physic' was granted at Dublin some time before 1763, and that a M.B. *ad eundem* was conferred at Oxford on Feb. 17, 1769 (quoting note in *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, Feb. 18).

p. 102. **Marivaux.** For proofs see Sells, *op. cit.*, pp. 70 ff.

p. 104, note 1. **essays.** Many are of uncertain authorship. See the discussions in the edition of Gibbs: 'attributed essays' (English soldiers and officers), iii. 447 ff.; 'later collected essays' (*i.e.* by Prior and others), iv. 416 ff.;

doubtful prefaces, v. 60, 348; and on matter omitted by Gibbs, with reasons, v. 408 ff.

R. S. Crane, *New Essays by Oliver Goldsmith*, Chicago, 1927, prints eighteen not hitherto assigned to Goldsmith, and published in five different periodicals in 1760-2. He leaves two in doubt and pleads for the rest, marshalling the evidence cautiously but with conviction. It turns partly on Goldsmith's association with the journals, and still more on the many coincidences of phrase, sentence, and idea with his known works (including *Traveller* and *Deserted Village*). The likenesses, I think, are due less to a 'fundamental parsimony of idea and expression' (p. xxviii) (for he had many floating *ideas*) than to parsimony of *expression*. He borrowed, as is known, as cheerfully from himself as from others, and the wording of an idea, once well achieved, was 'too good to be forgotten' (p. xxvi). Some of these papers are of little mark, but most of them bid fair to be included in the canon. There are admirable strokes: who else would have said of the Englishman (p. 53): 'As every man has some share in the government, he by this means acquires a conscious importance, and this superinduces that gloom of solid felicity which foreigners have mistaken in some for melancholy and spleen. I have to thank Prof. D. Nichol Smith for bringing this work to my notice.

p. 104. note 2. **seven papers.** These were sceptically treated by Cunningham; and Gibbs (*Works*, i. 406 ff.) sets them in a class apart, judging that Goldsmith may have written the first and helped in the others. Caroline F. Tupper, *P.M.L.A.*, 1924, xxxix. 325 ff., argues against Goldsmith, and conjectures the author to be Smollett, I think on fragile grounds; the manner does not, to my ear, suggest his handiwork.

p. 105. **poems.** See *Complete Poetical Works*, ed. A. Dobson, 1907, etc., in 'World's Classics.' Variants in the *Traveller* from the first edition are given, and also a few of those in the loose leaves of the early draft, *A Prospect of Society*, found by Bertram Dobell and published in 1902. See Dobson's note, pp. 156-7, and Dobell's appendix, on Sir A. Quiller-Couch's discovery that the sheets, owing to a Goldsmithian inadvertence, had been 'printed backwards in fairly regular sections.'

p. 110. **Goethe.** *Aus meinem Leben*, book x. See Hertha Sollas, *Goldsmith's Einfluss in Deutschland*, Heidelberg, 1903, for this and other allusions by Goethe, and for a note on the German translations and imitations of the *Vicar*.

p. 115. **debt to 'Le Legs.'** Pointed out, with other parallels, by Sells, *op. cit.*, pp. 160 ff.

p. 119. **Marteilhe.** See the reprint of the *Memoirs*, two vols., 1895, by Austin Dobson, whose introduction tells the curious story of the book in both languages. The original (anonymous) was prepared from MS. for the press by another hand, and was never reprinted till 1865. The translation bore the name, not well explained, of 'James Willington'; but Goldsmith's receipt for a third share in the returns has been found, and Dobson gives it in facsimile.

p. 120. **Animated Nature.** See the monograph by J. H. Pitman, 1924, *G.'s 'Animated Nature'*; to which I am indebted for many points in the text, and for the remark (p. 14) on his 'sympathy with animals.' The appendix gives a long list of 'sources' and illustrates Goldsmith's use of them by extracts.

p. 122. **obligations to French.** See again, for much detail, Sells, *op. cit.* : *e.g.* pp. 41 ff., on Goldsmith's allusions to eighteenth-century authors (Montesquieu, etc.) ; p. 60, use made of Voltaire ; p. 101, of D'Argens, *Lettres chinoises.*

p. 124. **Johnson.** Literature massive and still growing ; the bedrock for study is W. P. Courtney and D. Nichol Smith's *Bibliography*, 1915 (with facsimiles, 1925) ; and the condensed one by Nichol Smith in *C.E.L.*, x. 459-76 (1913), with his chapter on 'Johnson and Boswell,' *id.* Boswell's *Life*, ed. G. B. Hill, six vols., 1887. The *Life* by Macaulay, 1856, and Sir. L. Stephen's, 1878 (*E.M.L.*), are both literature, on their scale. A. L. Reade, *Johnsonian Gleanings*, four parts, 1909-23, full of new or newly collated detail, especially on 'the Doctor's boyhood' ; *Letters*, ed. G. B. Hill, two vols., 1892 ; but see 'proposals' for new edn. by R. W. Chapman in *Essays and Studies of Eng. Association*, 1926, pp. 47-62. For collected *Works* (none complete) I have used the Oxford edn., nine vols., 1825 (ed. F. P. Walesby). Also ed. by G. B. Hill : *Johnsonian Miscellanies*, two vols., 1897 ; *Lives of the Poets*, three vols., 1905. *Johnsoniana*, ed. Robina Napier, 1884, contains Mrs. Piozzi's *Anecdotes*, notices by the Reynoldses, Twining, Cumberland, and many more. From endless other comment, perhaps may be singled out Carlyle's in his *Heroes* ; and Sir W. Raleigh, *Six Essays on J.*, 1910 ; and his edn. of *Preface* and chosen notes from the *Shakespeare*, 1908.

p. 125. **fame.** See an article in *T.L.S.*, Sept. 1, 1921, on 'Johnson's reputation,' 'accurately reflected in his bibliography.'

p. 127. **neo-Latin verse.** On this see P. H. Hazen, *Doctor Johnson, a Study in XVIIIth Century Humanism*, 1924, pp. 15 ff. ; and on his learning generally ; and, pp. 260-71, for a sifting of the 'sale catalogue' of his library (which was published by the Johnson Club).

p. 128, note 1. **little gallantries.** On verses *To Stella*, *To Lyce*, etc., see D. Nichol Smith, *C.E.L.*, x. 168, 465. The authorship of many of these pieces is not yet cleared up.

p. 128, note 2. **scenery.** See his *Diary of Journey into North Wales* (in Hill's Boswell's *Life*, vol. v. pp. 433-4 ; entry for July 24, 1774). The place is Hawkestone : 'a region abounding with striking scenes and terrific grandeur. . . . Though it wants water, it excels Dovedale by the extent of its prospects, the awfulness of its shades, the horrors of its precipices, and the loftiness of its rocks. The ideas which it forces upon the mind are the sublime, the dreadful, and the vast. . . . Ilam has grandeur tempered with softness. . . . Hawkestone should be described by Milton, and Ilam by Parnell.' See too the better-known passage in *Journey* (ed. 1775, i. 86), 'I sat down on a bank, such as a writer of Romance might have been delighted to feign . . .' (in the happy valley, before reaching Glensheals).

p. 133. **The History . . . Abissinia.** So the heading of first page of text, in first edn. and in others published during Johnson's lifetime. The t.p. is *The Prince of Abissinia, a Tale.* For this see R. W. Chapman's ed. 1927, with collation of texts (many small verbal changes). See too edn. by G. B. Hill, 1887.

p. 134. **exotic stories.** For a full review of these see Martha Pike Conant, *The Oriental Tale in England in the XVIIIth Cent.*, N.Y., 1908 (with chronological table, pp. 266-93). Except for the *Citizen of the World*, the gleanings for *literature* between *Rasselas* and *Vathek* are really scanty.

p. 135. **Dodd.** See *Papers written by Dr. Johnson and Dr. Dodd in 1777*, ed. R. W. Chapman, 1928 (many newly printed).

p. 137. **authority.** There is a tale that a certain Oxford Head, in the nineteenth century, thus rebuked a rich and wasteful youth : 'Sir, you do not come here to *swill* and *guzzle*. You may look surprised, Sir ; but you will find those words in Johnson's *Dictionary*.' For some enlightening pages on the *Dictionary*, see Courtney and Nichol Smith, *Bibliography*, *s.v.*

p. 139. **Journey.** Critical edn., by R. W. Chapman, 1924, with map, collations, notes, and Boswell's *Journal*. The cancel leaf with the sentence on the melted lead is given in facsimile (also in Courtney and Nichol Smith, *Bibliography*, *ad loc.*).

p. 140. **as a critic.** See Joseph E. Brown, *Critical Opinions of S. J., Compiled and Arranged*, 1926, a useful collection, grouped first under themes and then under authors. See too J. K. Spittal, *Contemporary Criticisms of S. J.*, 1923 (notices in the *Monthly Review* of his works).

p. 141. **'harsh.'** On this see J. E. Brown, *op. cit.*, *s.v.* 'diction.'

p. 143. **editing of Shakespeare.** See D. Nichol Smith, *S. in the XVIIIth Century*, 1928 ; Johnson's service is vindicated : 'His text is easily the best that had yet appeared. . . . The value of his notes is permanent' (p. 48). See the whole work, on the stage versions, and on the successive editors and critics. For the principal prefaces and discourses see the same editor's *XVIIIth Cent. Essays on S.*, 1903.

p. 146. **compilers.** On these see Sir W. Raleigh, *Six Essays on Johnson*, 1910. Giles Jacob, *Poetical Register*, two vols., 1719-20 ; *Lives of the Poets of Great Britain and Ireland* (down to time of Swift), five vols., 1753, by 'Mr. Cibber and others' (*i.e.* chiefly Robert Shiels ; as to their shares see *D.N.B.* on each, Hill's note on Johnson's *Life of Hammond*, and Raleigh, pp. 120-5). *Biog. Britannica*, seven vols., 1747-66 : this work, as enlarged by Andrew Kippis and others, five vols., 1777-93, ends amid the letter F ; the later vols. embody many allusions to Johnson's *Lives*, and all are a valuable quarry.

p. 148. **traits.** For an interesting list see Courtney and Nichol Smith, *Bibliography*, pp. 132 ff.

p. 149. **parodists.** (1) Reynolds (see *Johnsonian Miscellanies*, vol. ii.) admirably exhibits the 'talking for victory' ; Johnson abuses Garrick to Reynolds, and praises him to Gibbon. (2) The anon. *Lexiphanes* (1767), by Archibald Campbell, full of hard words, is grossly overdone ; and (3) Prof. John Young's *Criticism on the Elegy* (Gray's), 1783, is also (*pace* Boswell and some good judges) a dreary affair. (4) 'Miss Aikin has done it the best ; for she has imitated the sentiment as well as the diction' (Johnson). J. and L. Aikin, *Misc. Pieces in Prose*, 1773, pp. 39-46 : 'the gloom of solitude, the languor of inaction, the corrosions of disappointment, and the toil of thought, induce men to step aside from the rugged road of life, and wander in the fairy-land of fiction ; where every bank is sprinkled with flowers, and every gale loaded with perfume ; where every event introduces a hero, and every cottage is inhabited by a Grace' (*On Romances : An Imitation*). This is very nearly the rhythm of the *Vision of Theodore*.

p. 152. **Mrs. Thrale.** *Anecdotes*, ed. S. C. Roberts, 1925 ; first published 1786 ; in Birkbeck Hill's *Johnsoniana*. See too A. M. Broadley, *Dr. Johnson*

and Mrs. Thrale, 1910, introduction by Thomas Seccombe ; includes the North Wales tour, with the journals of both the travellers, and some new letters.

p. 153. **Boswell.** Percy Fitzgerald, *Life*, two vols., 1891 ; W. K. Leask, *J. B.*, 1897 ; Sir L. Stephen, *D.N.B.* ; C. B. Tinker, *Young B.*, 1922. Erskine correspondence, ed. G. B. Hill, 1879. *Letters to Temple*, with introd. by T. Seccombe, 1908. *Collected Letters of J. B.* (except those to Erskine), ed. C. B. Tinker, two vols., 1924 (admirable notes and index). *Journal of a Tour to Corsica* (with memoir of Paoli), ed. S. C. Roberts, 1923. For *Life of Johnson* see note above. For earlier comment see Carlyle's strong, yet too patronising and scornful, vindication in his review (1832) of Croker's *Boswell* ; aimed against Macaulay's blatant paradox, 1831 (also in a review of Croker). J. W. Croker's edn., five vols., 1831 (but see, *s.v.*, Courtney and Nichol Smith, *Bibliography*), with all its faults, is still of value.

p. 156. **notebooks.** See *Boswell's Note-Book, 1776-1777*, ed. R. W. Chapman, 1925, for the procedure.

p. 160. **the novel.** Only general acknowledgments are possible: to (Sir) Walter Raleigh, *English Novel*, 1894 ; Wilbur L. Cross, *Development of the Eng. Novel*, 1899 ; G. Saintsbury, *Eng. Novel*, 1913 ; W. Lyon Phelps, *Advance of the Eng. Novel*, 1919 ; and the writers in *C.E.L.*, vol. x., 1913. For the prelude, 1600-1740, see Charlotte E. Morgan, *Rise of the Novel of Manners*, N.Y., 1911 ; a valuable record, with bibliography, of much buried fiction, with a clear account of various affluents of the novel (conduct-books, characters, romances, etc.). Also see the erudite study of W. Dibelius, *Die englische Romankunst*, Berlin, two vols., 1910, on the technique of the novel ; and note thereon in *Survey, 1780-1830*, i. 432.

p. 161. **Jane Barker.** See Karl Stanglmaier, *Mrs. J. B.*, Berlin, 1906, for titles and detail. I have seen the works named in text, but could not bring myself to proceed far.

p. 164. **Richardson.** *Life* : Austin Dobson, 1902 (*E.M.L.*) ; and Clara L. Thomson, *S. R.*, 1900 (with list which includes plays in various languages based on the novels). The mass of MSS. in the Forster Collection is drawn on by both writers, and also by Mrs. Barbauld in her edn. of the *Corr.*, six vols., 1804, with *Life* prefixed. *Works*, ed. Sir Leslie Stephen, twelve vols., 1883 ; and ed. W. L. Phelps, eighteen vols., N.Y., 1901-3 (not seen). For comment see the above, and, not least, Mrs. Barbauld ; L. Cazamian, in *C.E.L.*, vol. x. ; F. S. Boas, 'S. R.'s Novels and their Influence,' in *Essays and Studies of the Eng. Association*, 1911. For the international influence, Dobson, pp. 47 ff. ; also J. Texte, *J.-J. Rousseau*, etc., 1895 (Eng. tr. by J. W. Matthews, 1899), with a very sharp, but not unfair, judgment on Richardson.

p. 165. **Familiar Letters . . . Occasions.** So the headline of the pages in the seventh ed., n.d. (Bodleian) ; the t.p. runs : *The Familiar Letters Written for Particular Friends on the Most Important Occasions*. Richardson's ant-like industry is noteworthy. In his print of the *Negotiations of Sir Thomas Roe*, 1740 (on his mission to Turkey, in 1621-8), the editor's 'table of contents' (64 double folio columns) contains his digest of 627 letters. In 1742 he edited Defoe's *Tour through Great Britain*, with many additions drawn from books, correspondents, and perhaps excursions of his own. All this is in keeping with the elaborate contents, references, and notes in the novels.

p. 167. **lady critic.** Clara L. Thomson, *S. R.*, p. 157.

p. 169. **a Pamela.** See the tale, so well told by Lady Mary W. Montagu, in the year 1754, of an *Italian* 'adventure exactly resembling, and I believe copied from, *Pamela*' (*Letters*, ed. Moy Thomas, 1893, ii. 262 ff.). This Diana, however, was a simpler and more modest person than Richardson's heroine. On the supposed influence of Marivaux see Dobson, *S. R.*, pp. 48-50.

p. 171, note 1. **Clarissa.** Passages were added in later edd.; and 'these "deferred restorations" were first effected in the fourth, or larger print, edition of 1751' (Dobson, *op. cit.*, p. 83). Richardson also issued separately, in 'justice to the purchasers,' *Letters and Passages Restored from the Original MSS.* Clearly he had cut for the sake of brevity, but felt the morsels were too good to lose.

p. 171, note 2. **critic.** F. S. Boas, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

p. 177. **alternative terms.** See the author's curious plea, appended to the *Collection of . . . Sentiments*, etc., 1755, in reply to a friend who had demurred to Sir Charles making *any* concession to Roman Catholics. 'Clementina at the time was the only woman he could have loved; he knew not then Miss Byron': he was 'in honour *compelled* to make some concessions in compassion to an excellent woman, who laboured under a disorder of mind on his account.' 'Very few men in *his* circumstances would have done better; few so well.' (In another appendix Richardson answers a friend who desired yet *another* volume to show Sir C. G. 'in the capacity of a parent.')

p. 180, note 1. **Collection**, etc. This vol. gathered up previous garlands of the kind, attached to various edd. of *Pamela*, etc.

p. 180, note 2. **Richardson's English.** See W. Uhrström's useful *Studies in the Language of S. R.*, Upsala, 1907, which show that the novels are a mine of material for the slacker colloquial speech of the classes depicted. There is a pleasant index to imprecations: *adsbobbers*, *adad*, *adsheartlikins*, *'ifackins*, etc. A longer investigation would be needed to distinguish fully the cases in which Richardson (1) records current idiom, (2) archaises, (3) coins or imagines word and phrase on his own account. His own syntax, etc., in his letters can be, in Austin Dobson's phrase, very 'loose-shod.' See too E. Poetzsche, *S. R.'s Belesenheit*, Kiel, 1908 (*Kieler Studien*), who consulted also the Forster MSS.; he collects more allusions than might be expected (*e.g.* to Prudentius, Mantuanus, Ariosto, Filicaja). But this *Belesenheit* did not, I think, do Richardson much good.

p. 180, note 3. **Lady Louisa Stuart.** In her *Introductory Anecdotes* (1837), given in Moy Thomas's *Letters and Works of Lady M. W. M.*, two vols., 1893, i. 108.

p. 181. **fame and influence.** As to Britain much can be learned from F. T. Blanchard, *Fielding the Novelist* (see note below to p. 202). On the foreign influence see ch. iii. in J. Texte, *J.-J. Rousseau*, etc., 1895; Dobson, pp. 47 ff.; and Boas, *op. cit.* pp. 65-9; also L. Cazamian, *C.E.L.*, x. 16-19. There is still room for a comprehensive monograph.

p. 182. **Fielding.** The standard and amplest Life is by Wilbur L. Cross, *The History of H. F.*, New Haven, three vols., 1918; Austin Dobson's volume in *E.M.L.* (1883, 1900) remains, on its own scale, a classic; material facts and documents were added by Gertrude M. Godden, *H. F., a Memoir*,

1910; the sifting of facts alleged by Arthur Murphy (*Life and Genius of F.*, 1762) had been begun by Thomas Keightley in 1858. For editions of the *Works* by Sir L. Stephen, G. Saintsbury, (Sir) E. Gosse, and J. H. Maynardier, see *C.E.L.*, x. 413; all contain noteworthy criticisms. There are many disputed items (fully discussed by Cross). No complete critical edition yet of the *text* of the novels: on this see Aurélien Digeon, *Le texte des romans de H. F.*, 1923, and his valuable study *Les romans de H. F.*, 1923.

p. 183. **Tor Hill.** See Cross, ii. 165.

p. 185. **Tom Thumb.** Both versions edited, with critical matter, by J. T. Hillhouse, New Haven, 1918. The originals, amongst whom Dryden, together with Young and Thomson, is conspicuous, are tracked down (pp. 26 ff.). Cross, i. 67-8, points out the usage of Burmann, a number of whose works were in Fielding's library.

p. 186. **pivot of the 'Miser.'** See Digeon, *Les romans de F.*, pp. 28-9.

p. 188. **Covent Garden Journal.** Ed. G. E. Jensen, learnedly annotated, New Haven, two vols., 1915. See no. 7, defence of *Amelia*; no. 10, the handsome tribute to the 'ingenious author of *Clarissa*.' Jenson uses the test of *hath* and *doth* in sifting out the respective authors; it is by no means peculiar to Fielding in his own age, but it must be admitted to concur here with the evidence drawn from style and sentiment. Also on Fielding's journals see G. S. Marr, *Periodical Essayists of the XVIIIth Century*, 1923, pp. 108-115.

p. 189, note 1. **Fielding's library.** Catalogue first described, *lepido suo more*, by Dobson, *Eighteenth Century Vignettes*, third series, 1896.

p. 189, note 2. **Horace.** For a surprising array of references see Caroline Goad, *Horace in the Eng. Lit. of the XVIIIth Century*, New Haven, 1918, pp. 191-212, 483-526; and for a similar treatment of Richardson, Smollett, Sterne, Johnson, Chesterfield, and Walpole.

p. 190. **Wild.** Digeon, *Les romans de F.*, pp. 146 ff., shows that the Wild story, with its untempered irony, can be dissected out of the book with some distinctness, and judges that it forms the 'fonds primitif,' the Heartfree business being wrought in later, in the process of composition: a suggestive idea, but hard to verify. The same writer (in *Le texte*, etc., pp. 9-58) collates the chief changes made in ed. 1754, and prints two of the omitted chapters. One (no. ix. in 1743) is an amusing fantasy about monsters and phoenixes, of the Mandeville kind, and a parody of such recitals; it was abandoned, probably, as out of tune with the story. Some of the principal changes (much fewer) in the three novels are also noted. Let us hope to have some day the 'authentic and scrupulous text' that M. Digeon desires.

p. 191. **Shamela.** See, for the arguments for Fielding's authorship, Cross, i. 304 ff.; J. Paul de Castro, *N. and Q.*, Jan. 8, 1916; Digeon, *op. cit.*, 63-9; and the reprint, ed. R. B. Johnson, 1926.

p. 194. **Ker.** *Essays of J. Dryden*, ed. W. P. Ker, two vols., 1900, i. xvi-xvii.

p. 195. **time and place.** Cross, ii. 179-96; F. S. Dickson, *The Library*, July 1917; and 1918, 'Errors and Omissions in *Tom Jones*.' (Tom's route seems to have been first followed by Keightley in *Fraser's*, 1858.) I only suggest two points: (1) 'Mazard Hill' (book ix., ch. ii.) can hardly be, as Cross suggests, one of the southern Malverns: the distance is too great for the walkers (one a woman) to reach Upton the same night. (2) Can the 'wide common' of

bk. xii., ch. v. be Defford Common near Pershore? Dickson makes a possible case for Sophia's 'promising inn' (bk. xi., ch. ii.) being at Meriden, six miles from Coventry.

p. 197. **Coleridge.** *Lit. Remains*, four vols., 1836, ii. 375-6: 'an additional paragraph, more fully and forcibly unfolding Tom Jones's sense of self-degradation on the discovery of the true character of the relation in which he had stood to Lady Bellaston, and his awakened feeling of the dignity of manly chastity, would have removed in great measure any just objections—at all events relatively to Fielding himself, and with regard to the state of manners in his time.'

p. 200. **Voyage to Lisbon.** See A. Dobson's ed. in 'World's Classics,' 1907; this is the true unedited version. For the puzzle of the two edd. of 1755, see his preface; also Cross, iii. 83 ff. A memorable comment on this book is made by Thomas Edwards, of the *Canons of Criticism*, who belonged to the Richardsonian sect, and who winds up a tirade against the *Voyage* with the words, 'the fellow had no heart' (*Corr. of S. Richardson*, ed. Barbauld, iii. 125).

p. 202, note 1. **Germany.** C. H. Clarke, *Fielding und der deutsche Sturm und Drang*, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1897; there were translations before 1765 of all three novels and of the *Voyage*.

p. 202, note 2. **reception.** See the enlightening monograph by F. T. Blanchard, *F. the Novelist*, 1926, to which are due many of the details in the text. I have seen the production of 'Orbilius,' but not the *Essay on the New Species*, etc. Blanchard carries the story of Fielding's reputation in Britain down to modern times, and (pp. 256-9) sketches his fortunes in France and Germany. He was soon translated into German, was imitated by Wieland, and was honourably named by Lessing, Goethe, and Schiller.

p. 203. **As a man.** A long story: enough to say that Austin Dobson, in 1883, sifted the old legends made current by Murphy, Horace Walpole, and others, and delicately restored the balance: a labour continued, with more recent evidence and at length, by Cross.

p. 204. **Smollett.** Bibliography (1913) in *C.E.L.*, x. 418-21. *Life and Letters*, by Lewis Melville, 1926; David Hannay, *Life*, 1897; T. Seccombe in *D.N.B.* and *E.B.* *Letters*, ed. E. S. Noyes, 1926 (includes fresh ones). H. S. Buck, *S., a Study*, 1925 ('chiefly *Peregrine Pickle*'). O. Smeaton, *S.*, 1897; R. Chambers, *Life and Selections*, 1867. Of more recent edd. of *Works* (excluding *Hist. of England* and many miscellanea), see that by G. Saintsbury, twelve vols., 1895, with critical prefaces; and one, twelve vols., 1899-1901, with introduction in vol. i. by W. E. Henley.

p. 209. **Pickle.** See Buck, *op. cit.*, for collation of the two texts, and for full discussion of the changes, and also of the Lady Vane *Memoirs*; I have embodied some of his discoveries.

p. 213. **Travels.** In 'World's Classics,' with notable introduction by T. Seccombe, 1907. See too his article in *D.N.B.*

p. 216. **critic.** Louis Cazamian, *Hist. de la litt. anglaise* (Legouis and Cazamian), 1924, p. 842.

p. 217, note 1. **Sterne.** Wilbur L. Cross, *Life and Times of L. S.* (1909), new and revised edn., two vols., 1925; includes, besides bibliography and list

of known MSS., Sterne's hitherto unpublished *Letter-Book*, and many new letters, etc. L. Melville, *Life and Letters*, two vols., 1911. W. Sichel, *S., a Study*, 1910. For earlier matter see Sir Sidney Lee in *D.N.B.* and his whole article. See too H. D. Traill, *Sterne*, in *E.M.L.*, 1882. *Works and Life*, ed. Cross, twelve vols., N.Y., 1904. *Works*, ed. G. Saintsbury, six vols., 1894 (contains, besides the novels, selected sermons and letters). *Journal to Eliza*, in Cross's edn. (in full), in Melville, and in Sichel. *Comment:* the above, especially Saintsbury; also the severe Sir L. Stephen, *Hours in a Library*, vol. iii., 1892; Bagehot, *Lit. Studies*; and Paul Stapfer, *L. S.*, 1870 (with the alleged *Fragment inédit*, which seems to most critics and myself quite un-Sternian).

p. 217, note 2. **Goethe and Sterne.** See W. R. R. Pinger, *L. S. and Goethe*, Univ. of California Publications, 1918. The late Professor Pinger collected all the reff. in Goethe, and his review is completed by Lawrence M. Price. The passages of most interest are: on 'sentimentality,' in letter to Schiller, Aug. 16, 1797; on the influence of 'Yorick-Sterne' thereon (1820), in *Campagne in Frankreich, 1792*; on his debt to Sterne, in *Kunst und Alterthum: Lorenz Sterne* (1826); on the same (remark about the oxen, etc.) to Eckermann, Dec. 16, 1828. Goethe founded some of his praises on the spurious *Koran*, 1770, really made by R. Griffiths, and at the time generally credited to Sterne; and included many maxims taken therefrom, under the title of *Aus Makariens Archiv*, in the appendix to *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*, vol. iii. (see Pinger, pp. 9-10, 35-9).

p. 218, note 1. **Sterne in France.** See F. Browne Barton, *Etude sur l'influence de L. S. en France au xviiie siècle*, 1911; which gives a list of editions, translations, imitations, and studies, with an account in detail of obscure followers like Gorgy and Vernes, and a fuller one of the effect of Sterne upon Diderot (in *Jacques le fataliste*) and upon Xavier de Maistre (in *Autour de ma chambre*, etc.). It was the 'sensibility,' which chimed in with the temper of Rousseauism, rather than Sterne's untranslatable humour, that appealed to the French mind at the time; but his popularity has continued, and the French versions up to date are numberless.

p. 218, note 2. **Italy.** See *Sterne in Italia*, by the late G. Rabizzani, Rome (1919); the labours on Sterne of Ugo Foscolo, and his influence on the Italian romantic writers, are fully described; and pp. 7-21 give a useful sketch of the bibliographical data for Sterne's general influence abroad. I have not seen the same writer's *L. S.*, Genoa, 1914, in the series *Profili*.

p. 220, note 1. **Watchcoat.** Printed by Saintsbury, vol. vi.; for details see Cross, ch. vii. The play made with the symbolic black plush breeches suggests *A Tale of a Tub*; the bluntly colloquial and monosyllabic English, the *History of John Bull*.

p. 220, note 2. **outcry.** The verdict of Richardson is of interest (1761; *Corr.*, ed. Barbauld, v. 145): he finds that *Tristram* is 'execrable,' prophesies that the book will die, and thinks it 'too gross to be inflaming' (a sentence that just misses the mark). But he has to admit that 'there is subject for mirth . . . Yorick, Uncle Toby, and Trim are admirably characterised, and very interesting.'

p. 222, note 1. **Patch.** Drawing reproduced in 'George Paston,' *Social Caricature in the XVIIIth Century*, 1905, plate 94, p. 65.

p. 222, note 2. **Sterne's sources.** This inquiry, begun by Ferriar, and carried further by Sir Sidney Lee (*D.N.B.*), is developed by Cross, *Life*, ch. vi. ; and besides the works given in my text may be named John Dunton's *Voyage Round the World*, 1691, to which Sterne avowed a debt : here he found many typographical tricks, and also 'the pre-natal history of the hero' (Cross, i. 132). Samuel Butler and Erasmus, Bacon and Robert Flud, and many writers on fortification, are also cited among Sterne's creditors.

p. 223. **liberated the novel.** I am in debt here to that admirable judge, the late C. E. Vaughan, in *C.E.L.*, vol. x., ch. iii.

p. 231. **Gaudentio di Lucca.** There seems to be no modern reprint, but the book is worth one. I can find nothing about Simon Berington, who is not in the *D.N.B.*

p. 233. **Peter Wilkins.** Ed. A. H. Bullen, two vols., 1884. There is also a reprint, 1925.

p. 235. **Buncle.** Ed. E. A. Baker, with introduction, 1904.

p. 238. **Fool of Quality.** Ed. E. A. Baker, with introduction, 1906.

p. 242. **Mrs. Frances Sheridan.** The *Memoirs of the Life and Writings*, by her granddaughter, Alicia Lefanu, 1824, are full of entertainment, and relate, *e.g.*, the theatrical wars which drove the Sheridans from Dublin ; their association with Young, Garrick, Johnson, Richardson, etc. ; and the fortunes of Mrs. Sheridan's plays. There is also a long *précis*, with extracts (pp. 115-94), of *Sidney Bidulph*. It was to Mrs. Sheridan that Johnson said, 'Turn your daughter loose in your library. . . .' *Nourjahad*, reprinted 1927.

p. 246, note 1. **Journey to Bath.** In W. Fraser Rae, *Sheridan's Plays*, 1902, pp. 263-318 ; a phrase or two from it was used in the *Rivals* ('contagious countries'). The *Discovery* has been 'adapted for the modern stage' by Aldous Huxley, 1924.

p. 246, note 2. **Chrysal.** Reprint, ed. E. A. Baker, n.d., with introduction and notes (the fullest account I have found). William Davis, *An Olio*, etc., 1814 (Bodleian), professes to give a 'key' to the persons in the book. The chief authority for Johnstone (or Johnston) is in *Gent. Mag.*, 1810, i. 311 (anon.). *The Reverie, or a Flight to the Paradise of Fools*, two vols., 1763, is a series of satiric and realistic scenes, which I found indigestible.

p. 247. **Pompey.** Reprinted 1926, with introduction, by Arundel de Re ; and with the 1752 dedication to Fielding. This is a defence of fiction against the scorn, not only of metaphysicians, politicians, *savants*, etc. (who at least have an excuse), but of 'beaux, rakes, petit-maitres [*sic*], and fine ladies whose lives are spent in doing the things which novels record.'

p. 248. **Man of Feeling.** Ed. Hamish Miles, 1928.

p. 252. **Graves.** For the best account of him and of the 'coterie' see W. H. Hutton, *C.E.L.*, x. 275-8. *Domestic Happiness* is in *Reveries of Solitude*, 1793, pp. 173-4 ; the other verses named in text are in *The Triflers*, 1806. I regret not to have been able to see *Eugenius*, 1785, and *Plexippus*, 1790. The *Spiritual Quixote* is also noticed in *Survey, 1780-1830*, i. 175-6. It is in Mrs. Barbauld's *Brit. Novelists*, vols. xxxii. and xxxiii. Graves's translation of Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*, 1792, has been reprinted, 1905 (with note by Sir Sidney Lee).

p. 258. **drama**; Chs. IX.-XI. See (besides his *British Drama*, 1925, pp. 259-300) Allardyce Nicoll, *Hist. of Early XVIIIth Cent. Drama, 1700-1750* (1925), and similar *History, 1750-1800* (1926). These works embody, correct, and much augment the older chronicles; of which the chief is John Genest, *Some Account of the Eng. Stage*, ten vols., 1832, vols. iii. and iv. This is a serial record giving dates, stories, etc., of countless plays, in telegraphic style and with capricious shrewd comment. See further the valuable review in A. H. Thorndike, *Tragedy*, 1908, pp. 281 ff. Also G. H. Nettleton, *Camb. Eng. Lit.*, vol. x., ch. ix., and lists, pp. 425-46; and his *Eng. Drama of Restoration and XVIIIth Cent.*, 1914. Dates in my text are of first performance (*not* necessarily of first publication) unless otherwise specified. The titles given there, and in notes, are a strict selection, and many plays I have read are unmentioned; but I by no means profess to have viewed all of this extinct flora, which takes the whole time of a specialist.

p. 259. **Cibber.** *Apology*, ed. R. W. Lowe, two vols., 1889 (notes and bibliography; with the *Brief Supplement* of Anthony Aston, containing vivid accounts of the old actors). Lowe also quotes from the *Egotist, or Colley upon Cibber*, 1743, which he thinks is by Colley himself; and from the *Laureat*, 1740, a clever hostile pamphlet. See *Life and Times of C. C.*, by F. Dorothy Senior, 1928 (with reprint of *Careless Husband*). For Mrs. Charke see Joseph Knight in *D.N.B.*

p. 260. **Lessing.** *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, no. 5, May 15, 1767.

p. 262. **Garrick.** *Life*; by Percy Fitzgerald, two vols., 1868; by Joseph Knight, 1894; and see Mrs. Clement Parsons, *G. and his Circle*, 1906. *Private Corr. of D. G.*, two vols., 1831, ed. J. Boaden (anon.); who (Fitzgerald, i.-xiv.) is said to have garbled some of the letters. There is also a great mass in MS. in the Forster Collection, South Kensington, drawn upon by the biographers. I have used *Dramatic Works*, three vols., 1798, which, however, include, amongst their twenty-four items, several of Garrick's versions of Shakespeare, and the *Clandestine Marriage* and other doubtful pieces; and *Poet. Works*, ed. and published by G. Kearsley, two vols., 1785. For theatrical history and also for French connexions, see F. A. Hedgcock, *A Cosmopolitan Actor: D. G. and his French Friends* [1911].

p. 263, note 1. **good nature.** So Alexander Carlyle, *Autobiography*, 1806, p. 342; *sub anno* 1758. This is a pleasing sketch of Garrick, who, despite his 'vanity' and 'troublesome and watchful jealousy,' was 'very entertaining company.' 'His desire to oblige, his want of arrogance, and the delicacy of his mimicry, made him very agreeable. He had no affected reserve.'

p. 263, note 2. **Mrs. Clive.** She left one little light farce, *The Rehearsal, or Bays in Petticoats*, 1753, containing a fleer at the bad elocution of operatic singers: 'the audience will never endure you in this kind of singing, if they understand what you say'; and the 'burletta' is defined as 'a kind of poor relation to an opera.'

p. 264. **treatment of Shakespeare.** See T. R. Lounsbury, *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist*, 1901, ch. viii., 'Alterations in Shakespeare's plays,' on these practices; and pp. 209 ff. on the special marks of the 'romantic' drama (disregard of unities; mixture of tragedy and comedy; violent scenes acted *coram populo*).

p. 265. **Woffington.** The little ditty to 'Peggy' ('Once more I'll tune my vocal shell') is a delightful one, but the authorship is doubtful; the other claimant is Sir Charles Hanbury Williams: 'Garrick's claim to it is not, however, disproved' (Knight, *op. cit.*, p. 54).

p. 267. **Townley.** On *High Life Below Stairs*, and the scene in the house, see Knight, p. 176.

p. 268. **Foote.** The *Works*, two vols., 1799, contain nineteen pieces, but not the *Diversions of the Morning* (printed in William Cooke's *Memoirs of S. F., Esq., with a Collection of his Bon-Mots*, etc., three vols., 1805, along with two other dramatic trifles). There is a full and valuable article by Sir Adolphus Ward, in *D.N.B.*, 11th ed.; but I cannot bring myself to be so kind to Foote.

p. 269, note 1. **Maid of Bath.** For this business see Clementina Black, *The Linleys of Bath* (1911), ed. 1926, pp. 29 ff. The Major Rackett of the play is there identified as one Major Thomas Mathews.

p. 269, note 2. **Tate Wilkinson.** His *Memoirs of His Own Life*, four vols., 1790, are illiterate, rambling, and not good-natured; but there is life in them, and observation; they are a document of value; and Wilkinson, in his quality as a mimic, seems to give us the very accent of Garrick in his disjointed conversation, and also of Whitefield, whom he studied for the part of Squintum in the *Hypocrite*.

p. 271. **Macklin.** See Judge E. A. Parry, *Charles Macklin*, 1891, for a *Life* and sympathetic criticism.

p. 274, note 1. **Colman the Elder.** I have used *Dramatic Works*, four vols., 1777. He lived till 1794, but his later plays are mostly musical entertainments. He also wrote much in the *Connoisseur* (see Ch. IV. in text). See list of works in *C.E.L.*, x. 429. R. B. Peake, *Memoirs of the Colman Family*, two vols., 1841, treats of the elder Colman in vol. i. and in much of vol. ii. For dispute as to shares in the *Clandestine Marriage* see i. 158 ff. The *Random Records*, two vols., 1830, of George Colman the younger (1762-1836) are largely used by Peake, and also contain many traits of Johnson, Goldsmith, etc.

p. 274, note 2. **Colman's translations.** In vol. iii. of *Prose on Several Occasions*, three vols., 1787, is the version of *Ars Poetica*, first printed 1783; the preface argues that Horace wrote in order delicately to dissuade the young Pisos from making tragedies. The version is lively, but neither 'close' nor 'literal' as Colman professes. That of Terence, 1785, is in 'familiar blank verse.' The reference (p. xvi) to Gravina's *Della Tragedia* is unusual for this period.

p. 278. **The Way to Keep Him.** Ed. Allardyce Nicoll in *Lesser Eng. Comedies of the XVIIIth Century*, 1927 ('World's Classics').

p. 282. **nonsense.** *Harlothrumbo, or the Supernatural*, by the dancing-master, 'Mr. Samuel Johnson of Cheshire,' 1729, with its epilogue by Byrom, is a dreary raving parody of the musical play that is without plot, hero, or meaning. *The Blazing Comet*, 1732, is of the same sort.

p. 284. **drama of sensibility.** See especially E. Bernbaum's work with this title, 1915 ('Harvard Studies in English,' no. iii.). The time covered is 1696-1780, and the subject is both domestic tragedy and sentimental comedy. Many more plays are named and described than I have space to mention. For some controverted points see A. Nicoll, *op. cit.* (*1700-1750*), p. 115. An earlier

study, full of matter, is by O. Waterhouse, in *Anglia*, vol. xxx. (1907), 'Development of Sentimental Comedy in England in XVIIIth Cent.': see *e.g.* his remarks, p. 139, on the term 'sentiment' as then including true as well as false feeling; pp. 272 ff. (one aim of this drama is to *cure* middle-class specific foibles); and summary, *ib.*, of the stock themes (reformed husband, henpecked husband, heroine in bad house, attacks on the duel, etc., etc.).

p. 286, note 1. **duelling.** This campaign continues through the period, and appears in its latest comedies, *e.g.*: (1) William O'Brien, the *Duel* (1772), founded on M. J. Sedaine's admirable piece *Le Philosophe sans le savoir* (1765); of which see the elaborate critical ed. by T. E. Oliver, University of Illinois *Studies*, 1913 (p. 76 for sketch of changes in the *Duel*). (2) William Kenrick, the *Duellist* (1784): here, in order to deride 'this frantic folly,' is shown a fire-eating lord, who is cowed from fighting by fear of the 'murderer's' gallows.

p. 286, note 2. **Hugh Kelly.** *Works*, with *Life*, 1778.

p. 289. **Cumberland.** Besides the *Memoirs Written by Himself*, two vols., 1806-7, see Stanley T. Williams, *R. C., his Life and Dramatic Works*, 1917, a full monograph with (compressed) bibliography (pp. 330-47), and accounts of the obscurer plays (never collected). See too 'George Paston,' *Little Memoirs of the XVIIIth Century*, 1901, pp. 57-116; and Sir A. Ward, in *E.B.*, 1910.

p. 291. **The Jew.** See Louis L. Newman, *R. C., Critic and Friend of the Jews*, N.Y., 1919; refers also to the poor specimen of the race in the *Fashionable Lover*, and to the virtuous 'Nadab' in *Observer*, nos. 38-46.

p. 296. **Sheridan.** For bibliography up to 1914, see *C.E.L.*, x. 447-58; Sichel (see below), ii. 445-59; Iolo A. Williams, *Seven XVIIIth Cent. Bibliographies*, 192; but also *T.L.S.* (as below). Some modern editors: W. Fraser Rae, *Plays* ('now printed as he wrote them'; includes too Mrs. F. Sheridan's *Journey to Bath*, 1902); J. Knight, 1906 (notes); G. H. Nettleton, *Major Dramas* (the three), 1906 (valuable notes, tracing of sources, etc.; texts from Rae); Iolo A. Williams, 1926. One by R. Crompton Rhodes of the *Works* is preparing (May 1928). As I write, the intricate discussion on text and early edns. of *School for Scandal*, begun by R. C. Rhodes in *T.L.S.*, Sept. 24, 1925, is continued by him and M. J. Ryan (*T.L.S.*, April, May, 1928). *Lives:* see *e.g.* T. Moore, *Memoirs*, two vols., 1825; W. F. Rae, two vols., 1896; Walter Sichel, *S.*, two vols. (new material), 1909. See too H. V. Routh on the (later) 'Georgian drama,' *C.E.L.*, xi. 257-84 (1914), including not only Sheridan, but an account of dramatic conditions and ideas, and of Cumberland and others, and carrying the story past 1780. A definitive edition of the plays, poems, and speeches is still lacking.

p. 298. **Rivals.** Ed. J. Quincy Adams, Jr., 1910, with discussion of Fraser Rae's text.

p. 303. **Ode to Scandal.** Ed. R. C. Rhodes (with the *Portrait*), 1927; first printed 1781. The evidence adduced is strong, but the manner does not remind me, at any rate, of the mature Sheridan. The best lines are those on the forsaken girl: 'Yet many a time the wandering brain Turns with its feverish weight of pain, And then a thousand childish things The pretty mad one rudely sings . . .' The editor (also in *T.L.S.*, Aug. 26, 1926) seems successfully

to acquit Sheridan of the authorship of the *General Fast*, an ode credited to him by W. Sichel.

p. 308. **speeches.** Ed. 'by a constitutional friend,' five vols., 1816; some in the *Modern Orator*, 1845, pp. 93-245; many extracts in Sichel, vol. ii., who found (ii. 126 ff.) a version, apparently more authentic than any hitherto known, of the great oration of Feb. 7, 1787. For those on Warren Hastings see *Speeches of the Managers*, etc., ed. E. A. Bond, four vols., 1859-1861, vols. i. and iv.

p. 309. **tragedy.** See the suggestive list of types ('pseudo-classical, 'heroic,' 'Augustan,' etc.) in Nicoll, *op. cit.* (*1700-1750*), pp. 51 ff. In so brief a review, I have not kept close to them; admittedly, they melt into one another, and the frontiers are vague. This is less the case, however, with 'domestic tragedy,' a form which, I agree, 'gave the only live force to the serious drama of the age,' and which has a clearer outline.

p. 310. **Voltaire.** For full account see H. L. Bruce, *V. on the Eng. Stage*, 1918, Univ. of California *Publications in Mod. Philology*, vol. viii. Translations or adaptations of his comedies, pp. 79 ff.; *e.g.* the use made of *L'Écossaise* in Colman's *English Merchant*; of *Nanine* (suggested by *Pamela*) in Macklin's *True-Born Scot*, etc. The interest in Voltaire's plays was at its height in England in the third quarter of the century. See generally, the chapters on 'English and foreign models' (in tragedy and comedy) in A. Nicoll's *Histories*.

p. 312. **Young.** W. Thomas, *Le poète Edward Young*, 1901, pp. 288 ff., fully describes their sources; quoting (as first noted, he states, in *Biog. Dram.*, *s.v.* 'Othello') the story of a vengeance-nursing slave in *Guardian*, 1713, no. 37 (probably used in *The Revenge*); and showing, pp. 299 ff., the many borrowings of the *Brothers* from T. Corneille.

p. 314. **Siege of Damascus.** See Johnson, *Life of Hughes*, who says that after it '*A Siege* became a popular title': e.g. *Siege of Aquileia* (Home), *Siege of Sinope*, etc. Bury notes (v. 426, to *Decline and Fall*) that Gibbon's story rests on dubious evidence. I might have added in the text, had it been worth while, David Mallet's *Eurydice* (1731) to *Timoleon*, as another story of a tyrant (Corinthian Procles). There is a virtuous but insanely jealous Periander, with his tormented wife Eurydice, and there is a bloody ending.

p. 317, note 1. **Alfred.** For the later forms (1751, 1753), for Mallet's drastic operations on the piece after Thomson's death, and for the evidence as to *Rule, Britannia*, see Morel, *J. T.*, 1895, pp. 582 ff.; D. C. Tovey, in 'Aldine' *Thomson*, 1897, vol. i. p. lxvii; G. C. Macaulay, *J. T.*, 1907, pp. 196-7. Mallet changed four verses of the ditty; for Thomson's text see *Oxford Book of XVIIIth Cent. Verse*, pp. 252-3.

p. 317, note 2. **make game of a tragedy.** The practice also provoked protests. See quotations in Nicoll, *op. cit.*, *1700-1750*, pp. 64-6. So Thomson, in his own epilogue to *Agamemnon*: 'the bard . . . Thinks such mean mirth but deadens generous woe.'

p. 318. **Hill and Voltaire.** *Alzira* (1736); *Zara* (1736); and *Merope*, 1749. I omit these plays from the text, popular as they were; for though Hill pads and weakens, they remain Voltaire's property. For Lessing on *Zaire* and *Merope* see *Hamb. Dramaturgie*, nos. xv. and xxxvi.-liii. (1767); he

speaks of Hill as a dramatic poet 'nicht von der schlechtesten Gattung. In Hill's *Works*, four vols., 1753, i. 175 ff., are many portentously dreary letters to Pope and Bolingbroke about these versions. See H. L. Bruce, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-75; *C.E.L.*, x. 349; and A. Nicoll, *op. cit.* (*1700-1750*), p. 109. A. Murphy's *Orphan of China* (1759), from *L'Orphelin de la Chine*, is one of the best fruits of this industry. The *Dramatic Works of M. de Voltaire*, six vols., 1761, bear the legend 'translated by the Rev. Mr. Francklin'; but this is said to be a deception, and the rev. gentleman is credited only with *Oreste*.

p. 319, note 1. **Percy.** Reprinted, Bristol, 1911. A 'she-tragedy' *par excellence*, in which the heroes of the ballad suffer dissolution. Douglas is the jealous husband of Elwina; she has been forced to wed him but loves Percy, who reappears and learns the fact. They meet, in anguish, but in all innocence. Douglas and Percy fight; Douglas sends poison to Elvira, to be drunk if *he* is slain; she takes it, though he is *not* slain in the duel, and he is undeceived too late, etc. etc. The play was popular; so far had the serious drama fallen.

p. 319, note 2. **Jephson.** *Braganza, a Tragedy*, is something of a misnomer; for the wavering Duke of Braganza, who heads a Portugese revolt against the Spanish minister Velasquez (the villain), and his duchess, Louisa, live and triumph at the finish. This youthful production is commonplace but not always absurd; and aims both at decorum (for no one is killed on the stage) and at sensation. The Duke's priest is bribed to poison him with the holy wafer, but repents in time; and Velasquez, at bay, seizes and threatens to stab Louisa unless his terms are granted: a situation once more recalling the *Critic*. *The Count of Narbonne* is a much weaker, indeed a despicable thing, although Walpole's prodigies (uncanny drops of blood, etc.) are hardly alluded to.

p. 320. **Fair Penitent.** Rowe has *feminised*, with no little skill, his manly original; he leaves nothing of Massinger's grave satire or of the dignity of the trial scenes. See the acute comparison by Cumberland in *Observer*, nos. 77-9; also the edn. of this play and of *Jane Shore* by Sophie Chantal Hart, 1907.

p. 321. **John Home.** *Works*, three vols., ed. H. Mackenzie, 1822; with *Life*, which contains many interesting notices of the circle, and especially of Hume. Once the philosopher was charged to swear secrecy, and said: 'How is the oath to be taken of a man accused of so much scepticism as I am? You would not trust my Bible Oath; but I will swear by the το καλόν and the το πρέπον never to reveal your secret' (i. 25). Home's history of the '45 is given in vols. ii. and iii.; his letters, and notes of the tour with Hume, in vol. i. pp. 123-184.

p. 324. **Fatal Extravagance.** For proofs that Hill was the author, and not Joseph Mitchell, see Nicoll, *op. cit.*, *1700-1750*, p. 119; and Genest, iv. 295.

p. 325. **Lillo.** *Works of Mr. G. L., with Some Account of his Life* (by T. Davies), two vols., 1775. The admirable edn. by Sir Adolphus Ward, 1906, of *The London Merchant* and *Fatal Curiosity* contains: a sketch of Lillo's life and work; the literary and theatrical history of the two plays in England, in France, and especially in Germany; reprint of the Barnwell ballad, and also of the 1618 tract (*Newes from Perin in Cornwall*, etc.) on which *Fatal Curiosity* seems to be based. See too (pp. xvii-xx) on the

dubious *Memoirs of G. B.*, 1810, purporting to record an actual crime and trial of the year 1706, with much detail; an event which, most suspiciously, remains unverified.

p. 327. **actual tales.** The *Gent. Mag.*, Jan. 1732, tells one, which shows the kind of material at hand. An apprentice takes a common woman home to the shop of his master, a mercer. Later 'he put a crown in her hand, and desired her to go away; which she positively refused, unless he would cut her off enough satin to make her a gown and coat.' The position is saved by a friendly porter, who claps the lady, gagged, into a sack, tosses her into a cart of 'pease,' and leaves her. The prentice rewards the porter with the lady's clothes, and with three guineas that she had declined.

p. 328. **the species.** Not to load the text, I will name here two grotesque little specimens in very blank verse: (1) John Hewitt, *Fatal Falsehood, or Distressed Innocence*, 1734. The first and deserted wife of the bigamist Belladine visits the other 'wife' in boy's clothes, *draws a sword on her*, and is killed in error by Belladine: he is killed in duel by the brother of the real wife; but observes while dying, 'My conscience tells me I've not done amiss.' The other lady dies, off the stage. (2) Anthony Brown, *The Fatal Retirement*, 1739: truly said (Allardyce Nicoll, *op. cit.*, *1700-1750*, p. 123) to be 'almost a detective drama'; but it is a preposterous one, literally full of 'rape, murder, and superlatives.' The masked raptor, Pravamor (a good name), throws suspicion on the innocent Artamon, the friend of the husband; but is at last found out by the unhappy lady, who hears him talking. He stabs her on the stage; and is himself killed in fair fight by the husband, but behind the scenes.

p. 329, note 1. **Moore.** For a full account of his writing, with bibliography, see J. Homer Caskey, *Life and Works of E. M.*, 1927 (Yale Studies in English, no. lxxv.). There were many foreign versions (pp. 175-6) and adaptations of the *Gamester*.

p. 329, note 2. **one critic.** Ashley H. Thorndike, *Tragedy*, 1908, p. 310 See too his whole account, pp. 320 ff., of the 'drama of sensibility.'

p. 332. **poetry.** Besides the general histories of literature, W. J. Courthope's *History of English Poetry*, vol. v., calls for more special gratitude, not least as a study of the intellectual and social movements reflected in poetry. The theme is different in the valuable works of H. A. Beers, *Hist. of Eng. Romanticism in the XVIIIth Century*, 1899, 1908, 1922; and W. L. Phelps, *Beginnings of the Eng. Romantic Movement*, 1893. Many important facts, bibliographical and other, and new suggestions, are marshalled by Harko de Maar, *Hist. of Modern Eng. Romanticism*, vol. i., 1924. The text will show that my own point of view is different, and more orthodox; but De Maar brings out, *e.g.*, the extent of Milton's public, and the interest of Samuel Croxall; and he uses to the full the fruits, otherwise somewhat scattered, of American scholarship.

p. 338. **Warburton.** Owen Ruffhead's *Life of Pope*, etc., 1769, is partly based, he states, on MSS. entrusted to him by Warburton; and is also an attempt to retort to Warton's vol. of 1756. Ruffhead's comments are contemptible: he 'knows nothing,' said Johnson, 'of Pope or of poetry'; nor yet, we may add, of criticism. See Elwin-Courthope, i. xx. ff., and v. 364 ff., and

index *sub vocibus*. Also R. Kahn, *Pope-Kritik im XVIII^ten Jahrh.*, Freiburg-im-Breisgau, 1910.

p. 339. **Warton, 1797.** See Edith J. Morley, *Mod. Lang. Notes*, May 1921, pp. 276-81. At the end of the *Life of Pope* (vol. i. pp. lxvii-lxx) he dishes up, often verbally, the conclusion of his *Essay* of 1782, but strengthens the language: would 'point out what Pope *has actually done*, not what, if he had put out his full strength, he was *capable* of doing.' 'He is never above or below his subject.' 'Malignant and insensible must be the critic who could impotently dare to assert that Pope wanted genius and imagination; but perhaps it may safely be affirmed, that his peculiar and characteristical excellencies were good sense and judgment; and this was the opinion of Atterbury and Bolingbroke, and it was also his own opinion.' All this shows Warton's change of emphasis since 1756; he is now trying to check the opposite exaggeration; and is thus a measure of the change in taste. In a letter to Hayley quoted by Wooll (*Biog. Memoirs of J. W.*, 1808, p. 406), he approves Hayley's remark that Pope '*chose* to be the poet of Reason rather than of Fancy.' See too his paper earlier, *Adventurer*, No. 63.

p. 341. **Churchill.** *Life*: there is a vivid account of him and his group by John Forster, *Hist. and Biog. Essays*, 1858, vol. ii.; and see F. Putschi, *C. C.*, Leipzig, 1909 (*Wiener Beiträge*, xxxi.). These draw largely on Tooke's Memoir (see below); the latest and soundest sketch of the facts is J. M. Beatty Jr.'s essay in *P.M.L.A.*, June 1920, xxxv. (new series, xxviii.), pp. 226-46. I was also courteously allowed to refer to the author's typed thesis, 1917, in the Harvard Library. See too *Camb. Eng. Lit.*, x. 444-50, by C. W. Prévité-Orton (1913). *Poet. Works*, 'New Aldine' ed., 1892, by J. L. Hannay. The old one by W. Tooke (two vols., 1804, and three vols., 1844) has a memoir and a plethora of notes, which, though much scathed by Forster, are full of needful material. Also there is Gilfillan's ed., 1855. The ed. of *Rosciad* and *Apology* by R. W. Lowe, 1891, contains full notes on the theatrical allusions and personages. *Comment:* see Southey's review of Tooke (quoted by Tooke, 1844, vol. i.); and the anecdote in C. Johnstone's *Chrysal*, 1760-5. Sir L. Stephen, in *D.N.B.*, alludes ominously to the Wilkes-Churchill *Corr.* in the B.M., which I have not seen.

p. 342 **Trulliber.** The anon. author of the Catchpenny *Genuine Memoirs of Mr. Charles Churchill*, 1765, p. 96, states concerning 'Trulliber, of pig-selling memory': 'I knew the man well. He was a round, fat, short, squab fellow, that understood the nature of a pig as well as any man in Wales. He was educated at Jesus College, Oxford, entered into holy orders there, and sold pigs and preached the Gospel at Llanrhidwyd, in Wales.'

p. 343. **retorts to Rosciad.** See J. M. Beatty, Jr., 'Battle of the Players and the Poets,' in *Mod. Lang. Notes*, Dec. 1919, xxxiv. 449-62, for a list of them (*Anti-Rosciad*, *Churchilliad*, etc. etc.) described as 'practically devoid of all literary merit'; also the same writer on 'C.'s Influence on Minor XVIIIth Cent. Satirists' in *P.M.L.A.*, 1927, xlii., 162-76.

p. 344. **dramatic blank verse.** See Beatty, 'C. C.'s Treatment of the Couplet,' *P.M.L.A.*, 1919, pp. 60-9.

p. 349. **Falconer.** *Poet. Works*, ed. J. Mitford, 1836, 1866. I have compared the three edd. of the *Shipwreck* in the Harvard Library. My quotations

are from the third edition. To show the minute changes, the lines 'No lovely Helens,' etc., ran in 1762 (italics mine):

> No lovely Helens *grace the wretched shore,*
> *Or Cytherëa's rival gods adore* ;

And in 1764:

> No Helens *here, with lovely fatal charms,*
> *Excite* th' avenging chiefs of Greece to arms ;

The improvement in 1769 (quoted in text, p. 350) is manifest.

p. 352, note 1. **Milton . . . very widely read.** This is shown by R. D. Havens, *The Influence of M. on English Poetry*, Harvard, 1922, a detailed inquiry. The statement about the edd. of *Par. Lost* is on p. 4 ; and it is added that there were fifty edd. of Shakespeare's plays during the same period, and only seven of the *Faerie Queene*. See too on the issue of blank verse *v.* rhyme, pp. 44 ff. : for lists of imitators in blank verse (mostly feeble before 1726), pp. 90 ff., 359 ff. ; and, for the followings of *L'Allegro*, etc., pp. 430 ff. The earlier work by J. W. Good, *Studies in the Miltonic Tradition*, Univ. of Illinois, 1913, also tabulates many of these facts, and describes *e.g.* (ch. v.) the successive critics of Milton.

p. 352, note 2. **attraction of Milton** (before 1740). See G. Sherburn, 'Early Popularity of M.'s Minor Poems,' in *Mod. Philology*, 1919-20, xvii. 259 ff., 515 ff. *Comus* and *Lycidas*, though in lesser degree, were also echoed.

p. 353. **poetic diction**. See the patient inquiry of Thomas Quayle, *Poetic Diction* (in the eighteenth century), 1924 ; and for much detail, the French monographs, quoted below, on Thomson and Young.

p. 354, note 1. **feeling for nature.** See Myra Reynolds, *Treatment of Nature in Eng. Poetry between Pope and Wordsworth*, Chicago, 1909, for a fully documented study, with reference to the poets, novelists, travellers, gardeners, and painters.

p. 354, note 2. **philosophers.** C. A. Moore, 'The Return to Nature in Eng. Poetry of the XVIIIth Century,' in *Studies in Philology*, July 1917, xiv. 243-91.

p. 354, note 3. **painters.** See the learned study by Dr. Elizabeth W. Manwaring, *Italian Landscape in XVIIIth Century England*, 1925 ('Wellesley semi-centennial series'), and especially pp. 95-120, on the English poets. Their admiration of Claude, Poussin, and Salvator Rosa, and the definite effect of such painters on the landscape, *e.g.* of Dyer, Thomson, and the Wartons—or at any rate a coincidence of effect—is clearly shown. Lessing's *Laokoön* (1766) needs to be studied anew, in the light of these phenomena.

p. 354, note 4. **landscape gardening.** See Sir Reginald Blomfield, *The Formal Garden in England*, 1901, for an historical account (on which I have drawn), for an able and sympathetic appreciation of the formal kind, and for a somewhat harsh account of Kent, Brown, and Shenstone.

p. 354, note 5. **birds.** See Oswald Doughty, *Forgotten Lyrics of the XVIIIth Century*, 1924, pp. 129-38.

p. 355. **Thomson.** *Poet. Works*, ed. D. C. Tovey, two vols., 1897 ; ed. J. Logie Robertson, 1908 ; *Seasons* and *Castle of Indolence*, by the same, 1891. *Seasons*, text with full indispensable collations, ed. Otto Zippel, Berlin, 1908 ; *J. T.*, by Léon Morel, Paris, 1895, is a full doctoral monograph. For

bibliography see too *C.E.L.*, x. 502-3. G. C. Macaulay, *J. T.*, 1907 (*E.M.L.*), should be consulted ; also A. Hamilton Thomson in *C.E.L.*, vol. x. ch. v.

p. 356. **revisions.** On the many MS. corrections found, along with Thomson's, in B.M. copy of 1738 ed. of *Works*, vol. i., in preparation for ed. 1744, see Zippel, *op. cit.*, pp. vii-viii, and his transcript of these readings, pp. xxii-xxxi ; also G. C. Macaulay, *J. T.*, appendix, for proof that they are from the hand of Lyttelton, and not (as was long conjectured) of Pope. Lyttelton seems to have a mania for such labours, and almost (Zippel, p. viii) published a tinkered version of the *Seasons* after Thomson's death.

p. 360. **dissection** (of Thomson's technique). See especially Morel, *op. cit.*, pp. 412-68 ; compound words, shifted epithets, interchanges of adjective and adverb ; and also metrical habits (pause, overflow, favourite places for 'pyrrhics,' etc.). In my text, only some of the obvious features are named. See too Havens, *op. cit.*, pp. 80 ff.

p. 361, note 1. **single-moulded.** G. Saintsbury, *Hist. of Eng. Prosody, e.g.* ii. 13, seems to have coined this useful term.

p. 361, note 2. **Spenser.** List of imitations in the true stanza, De Maar, *op. cit.*, chs. ii.-vi., and pp. 239-40 ; earlier ones in Phelps, *Beginnings*, etc., and in Beers, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-101. For the actual measures, E. P. Morton, 'Spenserian stanza,' etc., in *Mod. Philology*, Jan. 1913, x. 365-91. For the old language, Karl Reuning, *Das Alterthümliche*, etc., in *Quellen und Forschungen*, no. 116, 1912. Several of these poems, *e.g.* G. Ridley's *Psyche*, and Melmoth's *Lycon and Euphormio*, I have failed to see. For a study of *Thomson and Romanticism*, see H. E. Cory, *P.M.L.A.*, March 1911, xxvi. 52-91.

p. 361, note 3. **Spenser's stanza** : *ababbcbcC*. Prior's *Ode* to Queen Anne : *ababcdddeE*. His *Colin's Mistakes* : *ababacacdD*. For many other variations, by many hands, see Morton, *op. cit.*, in note to p. 361 *supra*, *e.g.* the common sextain with alexandrine, *ababcC* : and also *ababccC*, as in W. Thompson's *Hymn to May* (see text, p. 366).

p. 364. **Spenserians** (between Thomson and Beattie). Besides those named in the text, I have seen (mostly in edd. prr. in the Harvard Library) the following, who all use the nine-line stanza : (1) Moses Mendez, *The Seasons*, 1751, and *The Squire of Dames*, 1751 ; (2) Cornelius Arnold (anon.), *The Mirror*, a queer series of 'characters' (miser, prude, etc.) in Spenserian diction, 1755 ; (3) William Julius Mickle, *The Concubine*, 1767, afterwards revised as *Sir Martyn*, 1777, a very absurd and confused effort ; and (4) Hugh Downman, *The Land of the Muses*, 1768, planned to dovetail between cantos xi. and xii. of *Faerie Queene*, bk. ii. This is much the smoothest and neatest exercise prior to Beattie's, although Downman later planed it out into flat couplets : both versions are printed in his *Poems*, ed. 1790. But in all these there is little nourishment.

p. 366. **Young.** See the full monograph by W. Thomas, *Le poète E. Y.*, 1901 ; to be supplemented by H. C. Shelley, *Life and Letters of E. Y.*, 1914, which contains many new letters of Young to the Duchess of Portland (Bath MSS.) ; and other documents. Mitford's (Aldine) ed. of the *Poet. Works* is still the most accessible. The memoir by Sir Herbert Crofts in Johnson's *Lives* was long the chief—and a most unsafe—authority. P. van Tieghem, *La Poesie de la Nuit et des Tombeaux en Europe au XVIIIe Siècle*, 1922 (in

Mémoires de l'Acad. Royale de Belgique (series ii. tome xv.), describes the far-reaching influence, abroad and at home, of Young, Gray, and James Hervey.

p. 368. **Lorenzo and Narcissa.** See Thomas, *op. cit.*, pp. 149 ff. ; and for the evidence that Philander is probably Tickell, *ib.*, pp. 147-8.

p. 372. **versification** (and language). Very full analysis in Thomas, pp. 387-424.

p. 373. **Conjectures.** Ed. Edith J. Morley, 1916 ; also by M. W. Steinke, N.Y., 1917, who in his introduction traces the fortunes of the work 'in England and Germany.' I owe to him (p. 21) the reference to Herder and the 'electric spark' ; which shows, indeed, in what sense Young was himself 'original,' in spite of Steinke's useful list of parallel passages.

p. 376. **la poésie nocturne.** Van Tieghem, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

p. 381. **Akenside.** *Poetical Works*, ed. A. Dyce, with memoir, 1834 ; revised (anon.) 1894 ; both drafts of *Pleasures of Imagination* are there. The name is spelt 'Akinside' in one edn. of 1744 (the first is anon.) ; but 'Akenside' in sixth edn., 1763.

p. 382. **Addison's sources.** See J. G. Robertson, *Studies in the Genesis of Romantic Theory in the XVIIIth Century*, 1923, ch. xi. ; where the striking coincidence is pointed out between Addison's conceptions and those of Muratori, *Della perfetta Poesia italiana*, 1706. 'That Addison had at some time looked into' this work seems 'the almost necessary explanation of the striking parallelism in the two writers,' though more direct evidence is lacking as yet (p. 249). The two, in any case, were 'fellow-workers in the establishment of the new aesthetic theory of the creative imagination' ; and Akenside, we may add, has his share of the credit.

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